

Historic Preservation and Community Character



Orleans Historical Society

12. Historic Preservation and Community Character

12.1 Overview

Orleans is valued for its coastal resources, small town character, open landscapes and historic villages. These resources contribute to Orleans' unique sense of place, and "protection of the town character" has been cited as an underlying goal throughout the planning process and this document. Without planning, land use changes can in a relatively short period of time lead to dramatic alterations in the appearance of a community, the lifestyle of its residents, and the condition of valuable resources.

Communities on Cape Cod are struggling to manage growth, balance tourism with the preservation of the environment, preserve historic resources and protect town character. Identification of the historic resources and elements that contribute to Orleans' character is essential to preservation. This identification raises awareness of their significance and allows opportunities for protection. Historic areas, archaeological resources, distinctive landscapes, and the built environment must be carefully managed as Orleans continues to grow.

This chapter provides an assessment of the resources that contribute to the character of Orleans so that they may be incorporated into the larger goals and strategies of the Town. The purpose of this chapter is to determine strategies to preserve and enhance the homes, villages, scenic roads and vistas that contribute to Orleans' character.

12.2 Goals & Policies

Goal

To preserve the important historic and cultural features of the Cape landscape and built environment that are critical components of Orleans' heritage and economy.

Policies

- Additions or alterations to historic structures should be consistent with each building's architectural style and should not diminish its historic and architectural significance.
- The distinguishing, original qualities of a historic building, structure, landscape, or site and its setting should be preserved.
- The destruction, removal or alteration of historic material or architectural features should be avoided.
- Where development is proposed on or adjacent to prehistoric or historic archaeological sites or sites with high archaeological sensitivity as identified by the

Massachusetts Historical Commission or Orleans Historical Commission during the review process, it should be configured so as to maintain and/or enhance such resources where possible. A pre-development investigation of such sites should be required before a final design proposal is submitted.

Goal

To encourage redevelopment of existing structures as an alternative to new construction, and to ensure that future development and redevelopment respects the traditions and character of our historic village centers and outlying rural areas so as to protect the visual character of Orleans consistent with the Cape Cod Commission's Design Manual "Designing the Future to Honor the Past" (Technical Bulletin 96-001).

Policies

- All development should be designed and constructed so as to minimize adverse impacts on the natural environment and the character of the town.
- All development meeting Site Plan Review thresholds should implement a landscape plan which addresses the functional aspects of landscaping, such as drainage, erosion prevention, wildlife enhancement, screening and buffering, wind barriers, provision for shade, energy conservation, sound absorption, dust abatement and reduction of glare.
- Building height, scale, and exterior materials should be harmonious with the character of the surrounding area.
- Landscaped buffers should be provided to limit the visual impacts on vistas, open landscapes, scenic roadways, historic districts, or individual historic structures. Preservation of existing natural vegetation in these buffer areas is preferred.
- Redevelopment in existing Industrial and Business districts should improve the visual character of the site, employing adequate buffers between parking areas and the street and significant improvement as necessary to interior parking lot landscaping, and facade improvements and frontage buildings.
- The height and scale of a new building or structure and any addition to an existing building should be compatible and harmonious with its site and existing surrounding buildings. No new development should include a single structure which has a footprint greater than 50,000 square feet unless it can be demonstrated, through the design of the building and vegetative or other screening methods, that the project will not have adverse visual impacts on the surrounding community.

12.3 Inventory

12.3.1 Historic Resources

Local Historic Districts

A local historic district is established and administered by a community to protect distinctive characteristics of an important area, and to encourage structural designs that are compatible with the area's historical setting. The first step in establishing a local historic district is to appoint a district study committee to conduct a survey of the proposed area. The survey is then used to prepare a preliminary report for local and state review. A final report is submitted to the Town for approval of the local historic district bylaw. Once a local historic district is established, a local historical district commission is appointed to review all applications for exterior changes to properties within the district. The design review process ensures that changes to the properties will not detract from the district's historic character. Review criteria are determined by the Town and vary for each local district.

The only registered historic district in Orleans is the Old King's Highway Regional Historic District (OKHRHD). The OKHRHD provides a means of preserving the original small village atmosphere and style of all Cape Cod towns along Route 6A. This area, fronting on Cape Cod Bay, was the original location of settlement. Orleans has chosen to be a part of this district. The Orleans Old King's Highway District Committee reviews proposed building additions and changes as well as proposed new buildings for compliance with specified standards. In the case of an appeal, decisions are brought from the local committee to the Old Kings Highway Regional Historic Commission.

In 1995, a committee was established to explore the creation of a historic district in East Orleans along Main Street from Rt 28 to Barley Neck Road and some of the ancillary roads such as Tonset and Monument Roads. The Board of Selectman mailed informational surveys to 202 property owners in the proposed district. The majority of the property owners (65%) supported the adoption of the proposed district but in 1996 the proposed bylaw did not pass at the annual town meeting and the committee disbanded.

National Register of Historic Places

The State Register of Historic Places includes all resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register of Historic Places documents and records the nation's most important and irreplaceable buildings, sites, structures, objects and districts worthy of protection. Nominations for inclusion on the National Register are based on local and state surveys and are generally initiated by the local Historical Commission. Unlike a local historic district designation, the National Register recognition does not place constraints on what owners may do with their property when using private funds. While the National Register of Historic Places is not a design review program, it does provide limited protection from state and federal actions. Recognition of an area by the National Register of Historic Places provides eligibility for matching

state and federal restoration and research grants and certain federal tax benefits for certified rehabilitation projects.

The only National Register properties in Orleans are the French Cable Station and Meeting House Museum. The *French Cable Station Museum* is located on Route 28 in the Orleans Village Center and is owned and operated by a Board of Directors. From 1890 to 1959, it received and sent messages from and to Brest, France, via the cable laid upon the Atlantic Ocean floor.

The *Meeting House Museum* was built in 1833 and is located at the corner of Main Street and River Road. Currently the home of the Orleans Historical Society and Museum, the Greek Revival style structure was formerly the Universalist Meeting House. The former Hurd Chapel, which was originally located in the Orleans Cemetery, was moved to this site in 1978. It contains exhibits of farm tools and sea rescue equipment. The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2003 a forum was held on the establishment of a Main Street National Historic Register District. A panel of experts from the Cape Cod Commission and the Massachusetts Historical Commission along with local officials held an informational meeting to describe the protection that a National Register designation affords. Following the public meetings on the designation, opposition was received and the Board of Selectmen forwarded the concept to a special study committee.

State Register of Historic Places

The State Register of Historic Places serves as a master list of designated historic properties in Massachusetts and provides an added measure of protection to these properties. The property must meet at least one of the following criteria to be included on the State Register:

1. Listed in or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places;
2. Located within a local historic district;
3. Local, state and national landmarks;
4. State archaeological landmarks; or
5. Properties with preservation restrictions.

Inclusion on the State Register ensures that properties will not be inadvertently harmed by activities supported by state agencies. The State Register serves as a guide for developers and state agencies in order to determine if state funded, permitted, or licensed projects will affect historic properties.

There are currently three sites in Orleans listed on the State Register: the French Cable Station, Oak Ridge Prehistoric Site, and the Old King's Highway Regional Historic District.

Other Historic Buildings and Sites

Historic sites are located throughout the town and are marked by bronze tablets maintained by the Orleans Historical Society and publicized as The Orleans Historical Tour.

Houses and Sites

The ***Captain Linnell House***, located on Skaket Beach Road, is modeled after a French villa near Marseilles. Captain Ebenezer Harding Linnell, Captain of the clipper ship *Eagle Wing*, built the Greek Revival style house in 1854. The house now functions as a restaurant.

The ***Crosby Home*** is a full Cape Cod house located near the end of Tonset Road. It was the home of Joshua Crosby (1779-1861), quarter deck gun captain on the U. S. frigate *Constitution* during the combat with *H. M. S. Guerriere* on August 19, 1812. He also served under Commodore Oliver Hazzard Perry in the Battle of Lake Erie during the War of 1812.

The ***Site of the Snow Homestead***, located on Champlain Road, was the home of Isaac Snow (1758-1855), the last Revolutionary War survivor in Barnstable County. He also lived in Cobbler's Dell on Barley Neck Road. He was a builder, a miller in the nearby East Mill, a mariner and a cobbler. He led the Orleans militia against the British landing at Rock Harbor during the War of 1812.

The ***Oldest House***, located at 31 Canal Road, was built in 1723. The structure is oak framed, from Eastham's original 1644 meeting house and fort. It was occupied by the Snow family from 1723 to 1956. Although originally a full Cape, it was later reduced to a half Cape house.

Stanger House, located on Monument Road, is a full Cape Cod cottage that was built in 1754. It was the setting for the American nature classic, *That Quail Robert*, written by Margaret Stanger in 1966.

The ***Captain John Kenrick House*** is a full Cape Cod style house located on Route 28 in South Orleans. Built in the late 1700s, this is the oldest house in good condition in Orleans.

The ***Captain Simeon Mayo House***, a Greek Revival house built in 1851, is located at 80 Main Street. Captain Mayo sailed in the China trade and made voyages to Africa as well. The house had been owned until recently by one family and is therefore largely in its original state.

Houses built prior to 1900: Under the direction of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, a survey of the 432 houses built prior to 1900 was begun in 1979 and basic architectural and historical information has been gathered. Inventory forms have been sent to the state and have been included in the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Inventory (MACRIS).

The *Site of Hopkins Homestead*, located off Tonset Road on Town Cove, was the home of Giles Hopkins. Born in England in 1610, and a *Mayflower* passenger, he settled here in 1648 and died here in 1690. He was the progenitor of the Hopkins family of Cape Cod.

The *Doane Mansion Site* was owned by Squire John Doane (1791-1881), who was a lawyer, state senator and arborist. His land included much of the present day Orleans Center, extending to the Brewster line. His house was removed from its hilltop to make room for Post Office Square. It is now located on Monument Road. The architecture is Greek Revival style.

Jeremiah's Gutter is located at Route 6A near the Eastham town line. It was the course of Cape Cod's first canal, used in 1717 to allow travel from the Bay to Ocean by way of creeks. It was also used extensively during the War of 1812 to elude British blockaders.

Commercial Establishments

The *Country Store*, located on Main Street in East Orleans, is a composition of eclectic architecture. The rear two-thirds was built prior to 1835 by William Myrick. It was sold in 1858 to Lot Higgins and moved to its present site. It was managed by Samuel Higgins until 1935, but later became known as David Bessom's store.

Galley West, a gift shop, is located at the Church of the Holy Spirit at the end of Monument Road near Route 28. The ell on the main house was the galley of the ship *Orissa*, wrecked on Pochet Beach in Orleans in January of 1857.

The *Site of Higgins Tavern* is the site where Henry David Thoreau rested in 1849. In 1829, it was a Stage Coach Tavern and U.S. postal relay station where coaches arrived three times weekly from Sandwich and Yarmouth. The original building is the central section of a present-day motel located on Route 6A.

Snow's Folly, presently the Orleans Inn, is located on Route 6A on Town Cove. The Victorian style structure was built by Captain Aaron Snow in 1875 using lumber from the cargo of a Maine schooner wrecked on Nauset Beach. Captain Snow was an early merchant of coal, grain and lumber transported to Orleans by his 90-ton schooner, *Nettie M. Rogers*, which docked in Town Cove. This was the beginning of today's H.H. Snow and Sons store.

Marine Resources

Nauset Beach is located at the end of Beach Road in East Orleans on the Atlantic Ocean. Several early explorers landed here, including Gosnold in 1602 and Champlain in 1605. The first recorded shipwreck on the eastern seaboard occurred here on December 17, 1626, when the ketch *Sparrow Hawk* was wrecked near Pochet. A German U-boat shelled the coast of Orleans during World War I in 1918 and sank three coal barges off shore.

Pleasant Bay is bordered by Orleans, Harwich, Brewster, and Chatham. Today it is Cape Cod's best inland waterway for boating and striper and bluefishing. The home of Webster Rogers, Orleans last Civil War veteran, is located on nearby Route 28.

Rock Harbor is located at the end of Rock Harbor Road on Cape Cod Bay. This area was the town's earliest populated, commercial and maritime village. Later it was a packet landing site for passengers and freight between Orleans, Plymouth, Boston, Maine and the Maritime Provinces. On December 19, 1814, the Orleans Militia repulsed a British landing force of the *H.M.S. Newcastle* during the War of 1812, occasioned by the refusal of the town to pay a \$1,000 tax levy by the British on the saltworks in the harbor.

The **Salt Works and Tide Mill** are located near the entrance to Nauset Harbor and the Mill Pond at Doane Way. The pond gets its name from the tide water grist mill that was built circa 1700. The foundation still stands today across the entrance to the Mill Pond and is visible at low tide. Operated by Timothy Cole and Lewis Doane, the mill ground twice a day on incoming and outgoing tides in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Nearby was the largest salt works in town, running 1000 feet along the east shore of Robert's Cove.

Snow Shore is a fishermen's landing in the Nauset estuary, named for Stephen Snow, a Tonset settler in 1644. The shore was once lined with fish shacks and flakes where catches were sun cured and salted, then sent to fish markets in Boston.

Coast Guard Vessel CG36500 is a 36-foot wooden motorized lifeboat famous for venturing out in 60-foot seas and 70 knot winds and rescued 32 crewmen from the stricken tank vessel *Pendelton* on the night of February 18, 1952.

CG36500 was built in 1946 at Curtis Bay, Maryland Coast Guard Yard, and stationed at the Chatham, Massachusetts Coast Guard Lifeboat Station. It was taken out of service in 1968. The Cape Cod National Seashore at that time obtained 36500 for preservation, but due to financial reasons were unable to restore her. In 1981, the Orleans Historical Society of Orleans, Massachusetts took interest and proceeded with negotiations to have it transferred to them. They were successful and it became theirs in the fall of 1981. Many lower Cape citizens volunteered time and tools to restore the hull. After countless hours of labor, a sparkling, fully-restored boat now takes summer cruises and trips to various ports along the coast.

In May of 2005 the CG36500 was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Other Significant Sites

Odd Fellows Hall is located at the corner of Rock Harbor and Namskaket Roads. The Greek Revival style building was constructed in 1846 as the Northwest (district) School. Since 1894 it has been the Fraternal Lodge #132, Independent Order of Odd Fellows. The Hall is considered the most threatened early structure in Orleans.

The **Jonathan Young Windmill/Town Cove Park** is located on Route 6A. This mill, built in the early 1700s in South Orleans, was moved to the center of town in 1839. The site was on a hill overlooking the Town Cove until 1897 when it was purchased and moved to Hyannisport. In 1983, it was given to the Orleans Historical Society. After it was restored by volunteers and located in Town Cove Park, it was given to the Town of Orleans for a cultural and historic exhibit.

Sea Call Farm occupies 6.35 acres of land with a view of the Town Cove. It is the only remaining ensemble of intact farmland with farm buildings in Orleans. The land was purchased in 1921 by William Fiske, who built the farmhouse between 1912 and 1922. Up until the property was purchased for conservation land by the Town of Orleans in 1987, it was owned and continuously lived in by members of the Fiske family.

In 2003 Sea Call Farm was listed on the top ten Most Endangered Historic Resources in the Commonwealth by PreservatiON MASS. This designation is intended to focus attention on and rally support for imperiled historic buildings and landscapes. Both the Orleans Historical Commission and Historical Society consistently support preserving the farm complex as a window to Orleans' past.

The Orleans Historical Commission has retained Candace Jenkins, a preservation consultant, who is preparing a National Register District listing now under the stewardship of the Massachusetts Historical Commission.

12.3.2 Archaeological Resources

Prehistoric and/or archaeological resource areas have been identified and recorded by the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). Known prehistoric sites contain evidence of human habitation prior to European settlement. A number of encampments have been discovered which help provide an understanding of early human activities on Cape Cod. In an effort to protect these sites from vandalism, they are not included in this report. Anyone interested in determining if archeological resources are present in a given location should contact MHC for assistance.

Potential impacts to archaeological sites by proposed projects are reviewed according to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act, or Massachusetts Burial legislation. In most cases, the Historical Commissions would be contacted for review for any proposed project which could impact one of these sites.

12.3.3 Scenic Landscapes

Scenic Landscape Inventory

As part of a statewide preservation effort, the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) conducted a survey in 1983 to assess the Commonwealth's scenic landscape inventory. The inventory uses three classes of scenic quality designated as "distinctive," "noteworthy," and "common." Distinctive landscapes include areas of the highest visual quality and include only about 4% of the Commonwealth. "Noteworthy" landscapes consist of somewhat less significant, although still important, visual quality and are limited to only 5% of the Commonwealth. The "common" landscapes comprising 91% of the Commonwealth's landscape, contain smaller sections of scenic quality but do not have the consistently high levels found in distinctive and noteworthy areas. The DEM survey classified Nauset Beach as a distinctive landscape and the Cape Cod Bay shoreline, Nauset Marsh and most of Pleasant Bay as noteworthy.

Scenic Roads

Orleans has designated a network of scenic roads as described in the Transportation Chapter. These roads are enjoyed by bicyclists, walkers, joggers and motorists, and provide character and a sense of place for the community. Many of the streets provide scenic water views, while others are narrow winding country lanes that add to the character of neighborhoods. In recognition of the role and importance of these roads, they have been designated by Town Meeting voters as “Scenic Roads,” a classification which protects them from destruction. No changes may be made within the layout of a scenic road without approval of the Planning Board.

Other Distinctive Areas

Orleans has a multitude of special places and scenic vistas. From the bay side creeks to the many salt ponds to the spectacular open sea on the east, the seaside setting has played a crucial role in the development and desirability of the community. Below is a list of some of the more noteworthy locations, many of which are targeted for protection in the Conservation, Recreation, and Open Space Plan.

- Views from *Kent's Point*, *Pah Wah Point* and *Sea Call Farm* (all town-owned) provide vistas outward to salt water and are equally attractive when viewed from the water.
- *Rock Harbor*, a summertime sport fishing center, attracts many visitors during all seasons of the year to enjoy the boats moored at the docks, the views of Cape Cod Bay and the surrounding marshes. This is one of the few areas on the East Coast where one can view the setting sun over the water.
- *29 Town Landings* provide vistas at a number of sites, including Quanset, Pah Wah and Kescayogansett Ponds. Town landings at the head of Town Cove are centers of activity. This is an area where shell and fin fishermen moor their boats; visitors come to take advantage of naturalist guided trips through the Nauset Marshes to the “Backside”; sailors at the town landing next to the Orleans Yacht Club learn to sail their boats and to race; and bird watchers enjoy birds at all times of the year.
- *Snow Shore Landing* provides excellent views of Nauset Marsh, the great outer beach and the ocean. Snow Shore Landing and landings at the Mill Pond accommodate shell and fin fishermen.
- Orleans boasts *17 ponds and lakes*, totaling 179 acres of fresh water area. Public access is available to four Great Ponds: Baker’s Pond, Cedar Pond, Pilgrim Lake and Crystal Lake.

12.3.4 Culturally Significant Landscapes

The built environment also provides significant landscapes which are enjoyed by residents and visitors. They include the following:

- The *Town Center* contains the original shopping center and cultural center of the town. It also contains a small cemetery at the corner of Main Street and Route 6A.

Two 19th century buildings remain (numbers 28 and 31 Main Street) at the west end of the town center. At the eastern end, where Route 28 crosses Main Street, can be found the Methodist Church, Academy Place (containing war memorials), the Village Green and the Snow Library. Along Main Street, between the east and west ends, architecturally significant structures (numbers 42 and 48 Main Street) are occupied by businesses. This area is enhanced by brick sidewalks, attractive plantings, a small landscaped area fronting the Community Center that is used by the Recreation Department and the Orleans Chamber of Commerce. The Orleans Improvement Association has provided attractive signs designating the Town Center.

- The *East Orleans Main Street Historic Area* is remarkable for its 19th century Greek revival structures which lend distinction to the town and reflect its village history. Many of these structures are used as bed and breakfast lodgings. The area includes the Orleans Federated Church (1828) and cemetery, the Meeting House built in 1833 (home of the Orleans Historical Society and formerly the Universalist Meeting House), the United Methodist Church, the former Town Hall (which is now the Academy of Performing Arts) and the Civil War Monument.
- *East Orleans Village*, located at the end of the Main Street historic area, is a small rural business district serving residents of East Orleans. It contains the old post office building, a small shopping area and the former Bessom's General Store. Just beyond is a recently restored 1860, Greek Revival structure now called Barley Neck Inn. This area, which includes the above-mentioned Main Street area, was considered for designation as a local historic district but the proposal was defeated at Town Meeting in May 1996. Long-term protection of this valued street of Greek Revival houses and 18th & 19th century structures is important to preserving an historic resource of the town.
- *South Orleans Village* is a small rural business district serving residents living along the shores of Pleasant Bay and inland to the "Chatham Road" (Route 28). It contains a General Store, the South Orleans Post Office and a few specialty shops.
- The *junction of School Road and River Road and Main Street* contains the Historical Society Meeting House, the American Legion, and the Town Hall.
- Water related cultural resources: *Town Cove* is a gathering place for persons drawn to boating. The Yacht Club, the town dock, outfitters and marinas draw fishermen, sailors and tourists. *Rock Harbor* is famous for its sports fishing fleet. *Arey's Pond* and *Meeting House Pond* offer anchorage and Marinas. *Nauset Beach, Skaket Beach, Pilgrim Lake* and *Crystal Lake* are welcome beaches on a hot summer's day. *Pleasant Bay*, the vast water body shared with Chatham, Brewster and Harwich, is used for shell fishing, aquaculture, fishing, boating and swimming.

Cultural Activities

Orleans residents actively support and participate in the arts. There are opportunities for artistic workshops for people of all ages. The Academy of Performing Arts is very active

and has numerous galleries for display of locally produced artwork. Public display of art also occurs at Town Hall.

There are many churches in the Town that add to the fabric and culture of the community. They organize and operate numerous activities each year centered on culture and the arts.

There are no institutions of higher education in Orleans, but residents are able to get access to higher education through Cape Cod Community College, Massachusetts Maritime Academy as well as other Massachusetts colleges.

12.4 Analysis

12.4.1 Public Preferences

Residents have expressed through workshops, surveys and interviews that they enjoy and wish to retain the small-town, rural character of Orleans. In the past, residents have supported standards and Bylaws that promote community character and smart growth across many issues and areas of Town. Orleans residents, even in the midst of inevitable change, wish to see the town remain much as it is today; a semi-rural town which values its maritime tradition and preserves the atmosphere of a New England village.

12.4.2 Existing Levels of Protection

Local preservation activities are organized by several regional and local agencies, each playing an important role in maintaining the historical and community character of the town. They are listed below with a description of their duties.

Orleans Historical Commission – Town-appointed commission which oversees historic preservation activities in the community. The Commission has recently completed an inventory of all local historic structures, and is working to increase awareness of Orleans’ historic significance. The Commission is responsible for nominating properties or districts for inclusion on the State Historic Register. The Commission is working to establish Main Street in East Orleans as a National Register Historic District. (HC-2)

The Historical Commission also administers the Town’s Demolition Delay Bylaw, which prevents the demolition of historic structures for up to 12 months while options for preservation are considered.

Old King’s Highway Regional Historic Committee – A regional board which is responsible for protecting the integrity of the Regional Historic District that is located generally north of Route 6. This district runs the length of historic Route 6A and includes an area in Orleans. The Committee must approve any construction, alteration or demolition of any building in the historic district.

Orleans Historical Society – A private non-profit agency that owns the Meetinghouse and the Hurd Chapel.

Site Plan Review Committee – A committee of Town department heads, including Planning, Health, Conservation, Building Inspection, Water and Highway. The committee reviews all non-residential development proposals for compliance with town regulations and proper design standards. Proposals approved by this group have the potential to significantly impact community character and aesthetics.

Architectural Review Committee – This appointed Town body is charged with reviewing new building plans, renovation, relocation and addition plans to insure compatibility of scale and style. This does not, however, apply to building in the Industrial District or the Old King’s Highway District.

12.4.3 Areas in Need of Improvement

Historic Resources

Unprotected Historic Areas & Structures

Anticipated growth of population and associated development pressures can lead to alteration or destruction of privately owned historic houses. Likewise, structures of inappropriate style and scale might be proposed for historic areas if guidelines and regulations are not created. In 2006, guidelines for the Architectural Review Committee were revised and adopted by Town Meeting. The Board of Selectman designated the Historic Commission to address historic district issues.

Lack of Awareness

The protection of both buildings and landscapes will ultimately depend upon the extent to which the citizens value them. Education will be key in gaining an appreciation of Orleans’ past and of its historic structures and sites. (HC-4) To that end, the Town can encourage a cooperative and continuing effort toward a shared knowledge, using the many talents available including the Historical Society, the Historical Commission, the Snow Library and the schools.

Mapping of Historic Resources

It will continue to be important for the Planning Department to maintain up to date information on the location of historic resources. The continuing development of the Town’s Geographic Information System (GIS) is an effective way to accomplish this task. The Planning Department, Historical Commission, and the Selectmen can be aided in their understanding of issues involving historic sites by knowing their location and surrounding development. (HC-5)

Archeological Resources

Archeological resources are known to exist in several locations throughout the town. The extent to which other archeological sites may exist has not yet been determined. Some residents have suggested conducting a study by a professional archaeologist to define and map such sites. This is not thought to be desirable at this time due to budgetary constraints and the potential for vandalism. The Massachusetts Historical Commission zealously protects information on archeological sites.

Demolition of Historic Buildings

The Town has a Demolition Delay Bylaw that allows temporary protection to the immediate loss of historic structures in Orleans. The purpose of the bylaw is to preserve and protect significant buildings within the Town that reflect distinctive features of the architectural, historical, and cultural heritage of Orleans. The bylaw encourages owners of such buildings to seek out persons who might be willing to purchase, preserve, rehabilitate or restore such buildings rather than demolish them. The current bylaw protects the historic structure for a period of one year so protection measures can be explored.

At present the demolition delay bylaw has been used to delay the demolition of some historic structures so they could be documented prior to tear down. Unfortunately, the bylaw has yet to save a building and currently the Historical Commission is exploring ways of making the Bylaw a more affective tool in their preservation efforts.

In 2002, Orleans voters approved a Demolition Delay Bylaw that requires review by the Historical Commission before a historic structure can be demolished. The bylaw is merely a requirement that the owner meet with the Historical Commission to seek alternatives to demolition. At the end of the delay period, the building may be demolished if an alternative has not been agreed upon. In 2005, the delay was extended to 12 months

In recent years, several historic structures have been demolished. Property owners of such structures have been willing to allow it to be relocated, but the Town does not have a site to which the structures could be moved. With the opportunity for funding through the Community Preservation Act, strong consideration should be given to purchasing an appropriate piece of land that could become the new home of a structure proposed for demolition, either temporarily or permanently (HC-23).

Historic structures in need of rehabilitation

Orleans is fortunate in that most historic structures are in good condition and well maintained. There are, however, a number of historic structures in need of improvements:

1. The *Aaron Snow House* (Orleans Inn) has recently been purchased by a family interested in restoring it. Major structural repairs have been completed.
2. The *Academy of Performing Arts* (formerly Town Hall) is gradually being repaired by the Board of Directors as money becomes available.
3. The *Oldest House* (1723) has been sold to a private owner and restored.
4. *Odd Fellows Hall*, Rock Harbor Road, is an early elementary school building that is badly in need of repairs. It is the most immediately threatened historic structure in Orleans.

Community Character

Village Center

Residents of Orleans, along with some local merchants, participated in a public forum in Summer 2005 to discuss the Village Center and review some smart growth design concepts prepared by the Association to Preserve Cape Cod (APCC). The concepts presented how increased building height and denser development in the Village Center could offer housing options and foster a vibrant center. Other concepts presented were encouraging parking to be placed in the rear of buildings, allowing for shared parking, and creating connections between businesses to allow people to walk from one shop to the next. Forum participants identified the following specific suggestions for improvements to the Village Center:

- Flower pots and landscaping are desirable and should be encouraged.
- Outdoor dining is desirable and should be allowed.
- Parking should be located near a lot of shops, and easy walkways provided.
- There is a need for signs to direct vehicles to parking (parking trailblazing), signage could direct parking to the back of buildings where appropriate.
- Any building height increase should only be allowed with a required pitched roof. Do not allow 3 story boxes in the downtown, regulations should be drafted to address this.
- Better streetscape creates connectivity and makes people more willing to park once & walk. Centralized parking would promote this activity.
- Need to consider how much building potential exists under present regulations before considering any increase. What is the amount of current zoning envelope being used by existing building footprints and required parking? How much more is available for use under existing regulations? This will help determine acceptable levels of increase.

In the coming years a full Village Center Plan will be developed and likely incorporate some of the ideas of past visioning workshops and forums. A Village Center plan is an “area specific” plan that will recommend zoning changes for the downtown, promote pedestrian and bike amenities through good design, and define the desired mix of housing and business expressed by the community. The 2006 Town survey demonstrated strong community support for developing a Village Center master plan. In the survey, 72% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed spending up to \$129,000 in FY 2009 for the development of such a plan. Also, 87% agreed or strongly agreed the Town should be involved in shaping the future of the downtown through Village Center planning.

Lighting, Utilities and Signs

The use of bright lighting without the appropriate screening techniques detracts from the visually pleasing environment for Orleans’ village character. In 2004, the Town passed an Outdoor Lighting Bylaw that requires that all outdoor lighting fixtures be shielded and directed downward. During public meetings on the Bylaw it was determined that glare was the major cause of light pollution and spillover of light onto

abutting properties. The Bylaw requires all new lights have shields to control glare and that lights be directed down to prevent against light pollution. The Bylaw, a general bylaw, set a time period of 5 years for all existing lights to also come into compliance with this bylaw.

Electric wires and poles clutter the landscape and detract from quaint appearance of the community. Parts of the village area have been almost entirely denuded of trees to create space for wires. If Orleans is to improve its appearance, the issue of utility poles needs to be addressed. (HC-7) All new businesses and dwellings should be required to place utility lines underground. (HC-14). At present, all new subdivisions are required to have underground utilities.

In recent years, there has been discussion regarding the possibility of placing utilities underground. Proponents argue that the aesthetic improvements and elimination of storm-related interruptions would adequately compensate for the additional cost of such an endeavor. Commonwealth Electric maintains a position that they will not obstruct efforts to place utilities underground but they provide no incentives to do so. A group, called the Cape Cod Underground Utilities Committee, has been formed on Cape Cod to study the issue and investigate cost-effective alternatives. In addition, Town Meeting in 1999 created a local committee to explore costs and issues associated with burying utilities at Rock Harbor. It is recommended that the Town continue to follow research efforts and explore the possibility of conducting a pilot project in the village area. It is hoped that cost-effective methods will be found to enable the Town to place utility structures underground along Main Street, Route 6A and Route 28 in the center of town. (HC-7) This may require state legislative action as well as regional cooperation.

Screening and Landscaping

Landscaping plays an important role in the appearance of a community. It can be used to create boundaries and transitions between developments as well as providing screening for areas that would otherwise interrupt the character of the streetscape.

Also, wires that cross over a water body such as Cedar Pond, can become a roosting area for large numbers of birds which causes fouling of the water. In addition, the Town should remain aware for future facility plans of ComElectric, and work with them to ensure that the new structures do not adversely impact the Town. (HC-12)

The planting of trees along Route 6A would create a more pleasing appearance. (HC-17) Such work would likely require a cooperative effort with Mass. Highway to ensure that beautification efforts are consistent with State guidelines for traffic safety. Items such as flower barrels can unify an area, and improve its attractiveness to shoppers. These could be distributed immediately by the Chamber of Commerce, with business owners being responsible for maintenance.

More attention to the needs of pedestrians and cyclists is needed throughout the town. Good sidewalks, benches, bicycle racks and safe pedestrian crossings, as well as tree plantings and window boxes, lend character to the villages and attract people. (ED-6) These amenities could be provided by the Town or by private property owners.

Site Plan Review

The Zoning Bylaw requires approval of a site plan for all significant development projects (see 4.6.3 for further description). Applicants are required to provide a site plan that properly addresses drainage and erosion control, provides fencing and/or buffering of adjacent residential uses, and minimizes off-site impacts such as lighting spillover, glare, noise, and dust. The bylaw also requires efforts to conserve and protect natural features and wildlife habitat. The process allows an applicant to meet with all relevant Town departments simultaneously, resulting in a comprehensive review of project impacts as they relate to the health, safety, and welfare of the community.

Shopping Areas

Although benches have been provided at several locations in town for pedestrian use (at the Village Green, Academy Place, Parish Park, and along Main Street beside the graveyard), little effort has been made to provide such amenities in the various malls and shopping centers. The retention of an attractive, pedestrian-oriented village center is a vital component of maintaining the sense of community. (HC-8) Several strip malls would profit from redesign of parking arrangements and new and extended plantings: Friends Market/Homeport, Cranberry Cove and Lowell Square.

More significant alterations to improve the visual appeal of the business districts should be part of an overall plan for each area. Village improvements are addressed in detail in the Economic Development and Land Use chapters of this plan as well as in the Design Guidelines section of this chapter.

Scenic Landscapes

Scenic vistas and scenic roads are part of what contributes to a town's character and should therefore be maintained. Growth of trees and underbrush at scenic vistas and town landings should be reviewed periodically and improvements made as needed. Orleans should explore opportunities to buy scenic lands along ocean, bay and pond shores as they become available. These beautiful areas attract people to the town, and so they should be preserved for future enjoyment as well as protected from development pressure.

Designation of scenic roads only affects work within the public right of way, and does not provide any protection of scenic landscapes viewed from the road. In order to preserve important views, the Town must use some combination of land acquisition, zoning regulations and incentives to landowners. (HC-18) It is important to identify those landscapes which, if lost, would diminish the town's character.

In addition to the existing Scenic Road Bylaw, the Planning Board should adopt guidelines to supplement the controls available under the Scenic Road Act. Such guidelines should include, but not be limited to, no unnecessary widening of streets or intersections, maintaining planted islands, preserving mature trees where safety is not compromised, and other means to preserve the beauty of the scenic roads. (HC-18, T-5)

Visual access to the water is important to the quality of life of all residents. Those who do not own waterfront property are able to obtain a connection with the natural Cape setting by seeing the shore from a multitude of locations. With the decline of agriculture, many of the towns open fields and meadows have reverted back to woodlands, obscuring water views from the public. New housing, fencing, and landscaping add to the condition.

12.4.4 Design Guidelines

The current Zoning Bylaw contains a section regarding architectural review (Section 164-33.1). This process applies to all building permit and special permit applications in order to review the appearance of structures and sites which may affect the town's cultural, economic and historic resources. The Architectural Review Committee is precluded from mandating any official aesthetic style or from imposing the style of any particular historic period, but the general guidelines provided in the Bylaw are sufficient to encourage the desired type of development style. However, there are additional considerations that should be included elsewhere in the Zoning Bylaw or made known to potential developers. (HC-9, HC-15)

Site Layout and Streetscape

A traditional Village Center features a mix of small scale uses on relatively small lots with narrow building setbacks. Main Street in the Village Center and East Orleans provides this traditional village setting. The location of buildings near the street provides a sense of enclosure for pedestrians and the frequency and variety of building entrances and shop windows along the sidewalk edge make for a more interesting place to walk.

Design guidelines and zoning regulations should ensure that this development pattern is preserved. Smaller lot size requirements in the villages should be maintained in order to encourage the greater density of buildings within the villages while encouraging a variety of store fronts along the street. In higher traffic areas such as Route 6A in the Village Center and Route 28 in South Orleans, the streetscape can be enhanced by providing additional landscaping between the street and sidewalk or between the sidewalk and the front of the building. The placement of utility lines underground could also improve the appearance of the villages. (HC-7)

The specific dimensional standards for the Village Center (VC) district are consistent with a village setting. However, the minimum front yard setback of 25 feet in the Rural Business (RB) district may be excessive based on the location of existing structures in East Orleans. This requirement is in contrast to the maximum setback requirement of 25 feet in the VC district. In order to ensure that new construction is consistent with the character of the existing area, a provision should be added to state that the setbacks in the RB district should not exceed the average front yards existing on adjacent lots. (HC-9, HC-20)

The other commercial areas of Orleans, particularly the General Business district, feature more intensive land use. There are numerous strip developments along Route 6A which detract from the small town feel of Orleans and make the area less pedestrian friendly.

(HC-21) The layout of any future development in the General Business district should make efficient use of space and try to avoid the traditional large retail strip dominated by a vast parking area. New development should site buildings at the front of the lot, with parking in the rear; and redevelopment should include structures near the street and continuous sidewalks from the street to the shopping center. (HC-9, HC-21)

Parking

The current parking regulations require sufficient landscaping and screening and also allow for flexibility by allowing businesses to share parking areas and businesses in the Village Center to make use of public parking.

Parking in the villages is currently located in a variety of places in relation to the businesses the lots serve (i.e., in front of the building, to the side of the building, on the street and in public lots). Because of the seasonal tourism focus of many businesses in the General Business district, the area features several large parking lots to accommodate motorists from outside of the area. It is preferable to locate parking behind existing and new buildings whenever possible. Certain guidelines should be adhered to with respect to parking (T-20):

- Where possible, shared driveways should be used for access into parking areas. This reduces the amount of asphalt area and creates a safer environment for pedestrians.
- Where parking lots are already located in front of developments, they should be properly screened and landscaped. This creates a buffer between the sidewalk and the lot and makes for more pleasant streets.
- Avoid a “sea of asphalt” through internal landscaping; adding bushes or planting a tree to break up long strips of parking stalls.
- Connections between parking lots should be provided to allow overflow vehicles to find parking space without having to re-enter the street network.
- Retain on-street parking on Main Street to modulate traffic flow.

While screening and internal lot landscaping are currently required within the Bylaw, some improvements should be made. The screening requirement should be expanded to include loading areas as well as parking lots. This will improve the appearance of the Industrial District in particular, as many businesses are industrial in nature and contain prominent loading facilities. (HC-16)

The front yard landscaping provision requires a minimum depth of six feet from the street line in all Business and Commercial districts. However, the only guidance provided is it “shall be landscaped appropriately and maintained in a sightly condition at all times.” The primary objective of this requirement is to define the property edge. This can be accomplished through landscaping as well as through the use of picket fences, stone walls or split rail fences. In many instances, businesses have made use of split rail fences along Giddiah Hill Road within the Industrial District to define the property boundary and street edge. (HC-16)

It appears that several businesses have adhered to the six-foot front landscaping requirement and other required buffers, but due to a lack of specificity in the Bylaw, have used only grass as the landscaping material. Plant materials should be specified for landscaping and buffer requirements such as requiring plant types and size. For example, deciduous trees should be expected to reach a height of 20 feet in 10 years, evergreen and ornamental trees should be at least 8 feet in height at the time of planting, and shrubs and hedges should be at least 2-1/2 feet in height or have a spread of at least 18 inches at the time of planting. Landscaping provisions should require that plants should be of healthy quality and be of a specified minimum size, and a maintenance agreement should be included in the property covenant. While some of these suggestions may seem obvious, each should be stated in the Bylaw to ensure that landscaping is appropriate. (HC-16, HC-17)

Building Style

Building style guidelines in terms of facade, material, and color are an important part of maintaining the character of Orleans. Buildings play an important role in defining the sense of place of an area. Residents of Orleans would like to see diverse architectural building styles, especially in the Village Center; but the color and material of a building should not contrast greatly with adjacent buildings. Furthermore, long blank walls should be avoided, and windows and doors should be at a human scale and in proportion with the area. Diverse styles and facades that include porches, arcades and awnings will complement the area and nearby buildings in village settings. Although this diversity of building types helps to make Orleans more visually interesting, at the same time it is important to maintain the character of a Cape Cod village that residents want to preserve. (HC-9)

Several of the buildings in the General Business district are representative of a suburban strip-style development. However, large retail developments can be designed to match the character of an area and give rise to an improved environment for pedestrian use. Some of the retail developments in Orleans' General Business district feature pitched roofs and architectural designs that more closely reflect the character of the town. Any future developments in the area should avoid long buildings and flat roofs, and utilize creative architectural designs which will help to soften the visual impact of strip development on the surrounding area.

The thirty-foot maximum building height limit for all districts is appropriate in most cases. However, a 30-foot high flat roofed commercial building may not be compatible with the character that Orleans is trying to preserve. At a Village Center visioning forum held in August 2005, residents considered allowing increased building height, but requiring a distinct pitched roof. This would be consistent with existing buildings such as the Orleans Whole Foods Store which is often cited as an example of good and desirable design. The concept was well-received.

One way to allow additional building height without permitting flat-roofed commercial buildings would be to create a new definition of building height. By measuring building height halfway between the top of the ridge and the wall plate would allow additional height only pitched roofs. By allowing increased height the upper floor could be

occupied but it would be limited to 40 or 50% of the usable floor area of lower floors. As part of planning for a vibrant Village Center, the Town should consider increasing building height, supplemented with a limit on the number of stories and possible limits on the use of those upper stories, in the building (HC-10). This type of provision will tend to encourage the use of gable, pitched, or hipped roofs, as opposed to flat roofs, for those property owners who wish to maximize the height of their buildings.

Signs

Residents in attendance at the Village Center Workshop expressed interest in creating directional signs that were more efficient for wayfinding within the town. There is a need to produce signs that better identify parking areas near the Village Center. (T-16) In addition, there are concerns about the number, size, location and style of individual business signs.

The existing sign regulations detail the proper location for signs and provide some key definitions, but do not provide sufficient guidance for businesses to provide signs consistent with the character of a particular district. Specifically, the current regulations do not adequately describe the types of signs permitted; differentiate among zoning districts; or provide suggestions as to the colors or materials to be used for a sign.

The Town should consider revisions to the sign regulations (HC-15). Key elements of an effective sign bylaw include the following:

- *Number of signs permitted:* A possible approach is to limit signs to one per business plus one directory or free-standing sign per building. This is somewhat less than the current regulations permitting up to three signs per business and may alleviate some of the “sign clutter” noted by residents.
- *Types of signs:* The definition section should be expanded to include descriptions of various types of signs such as billboards, roof signs, projecting signs, free standing signs, etc., because each should be regulated differently. The districts in which these types of signs are permitted should be clearly stated. For example, billboards are unlikely to enhance the character of Orleans and should therefore be prohibited in all districts. Projecting signs are consistent with a village setting while free-standing signs are usually more common along major roadways, such as Route 6A. Business signs in villages should be smaller in order to focus the attention of the pedestrian rather than the driver of an automobile while signs along a business strip may justify a larger size due to the higher speed of traffic.
- *Sign design:* The color, size and material used in signs should be consistent with an attractive functional, unobtrusive style. The most legible and effective signs do not depend necessarily on large size and bright colors and can complement the surrounding area while still catching the attention of potential customers. Treated natural wood and metal or plywood that is prepared and painted are suitable materials. Generally, no more than three colors are necessary to express a message. It is also preferable to display a minimal amount of wording on a sign. Store facades with several advertising messages are less effective as a motorist will not be able to determine the essential message in the short time he or she is glancing at the sign.

- *Sign illumination:* Signs should be back lit (halo signs) or illuminated from above by shielded fixtures. This practice minimizes light trespass and glare and is consistent with town regulations. Interior illuminated signs are prohibited.
- *Sign locations:* Signs should be located in respect to the existing “sign line” established by the signs on nearby stores and buildings. In addition, signs should be placed in locations where they conceal the least amount of architectural detailing such as columns, archways, sills, cornices, etc. Signs should not extend to a height above the roof line and are preferably located below the eaves.

Pedestrian Amenities

Pedestrian amenities are a vital component of any Village Center and include such things as decorative street lighting, benches, planters, improved sidewalks and crossings, as well as other amenities that make the area more pedestrian-friendly. Widening sidewalks and adding landscaping buffers between the street and sidewalk on Route 6A and Cove Road will make for a more comfortable place to walk in the Village Center, and can also play a role in traffic calming. Distinct paving patterns on sidewalks such as the brick used on Main Street in East Orleans create a more attractive streetscape, and should be expanded through additional parts of the villages. Creating benches and seating areas along walkways and outside of businesses will encourage more pedestrian use and help to make the village areas gathering places and destinations.

Lighting in general should be kept at a minimal level necessary for safety. Pole lighting should be kept low, not more than 12 feet, and fixtures should be “boxed” or otherwise directed to eliminate spillage onto other properties or public streets. (HC-13)

12.5 Implementation Program

	Action	Time for Completion	Resources Required	Lead Responsible Agency
HC-1	<p>Extend the current charge to the Orleans Historical Commission to include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appoint a member of the Historic Commission to act as Town Historian. This individual must be equipped to provide knowledge and advice on historical issues to concerned government departments; 	FY 07-10	L	Board of Selectmen
HC-2	Continue efforts to protect the historic character of parts of East Orleans along Main Street by nominating it for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.	FY 07-10	L	Historical Commission
HC-3	Explore feasible options for restoring historic structures and seek funding for the regular maintenance of historic structures, sites, and markers.	FY 07-10	L	Planning Department
HC-4	Improve the awareness and public education regarding historic structures and sites in Orleans in order to improve protection efforts.	Ongoing	L	Historical Commission
HC-5	Periodically update an inventory of historic resources in the Town's Geographic Information System database.	Ongoing	L	Planning Department
HC-6	<i>Develop and adopt an appropriate Demolition Delay Bylaw to prevent the loss of historic structures.</i>	<i>Addressed See Appendix</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>Historical Commission</i>
HC-7	Develop and initiate a plan to place all utility lines underground in village areas.	FY 07-10	H	Planning Board
HC-8	Develop a plan for pedestrian-friendly improvements in village areas including the addition of traditional street lighting that is consistent with the area's history and character.	FY 07-10	M	Planning Department
HC-9	<i>Adopt design guidelines for businesses to encourage building and site design that is in harmony with a Cape Cod village. Standards should be developed for building materials, facades, rooflines, architectural design, pedestrian access, and safety.</i>	<i>Addressed See Appendix</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>Planning Board</i>
HC-10	Revise the building height regulations for structures in business and village districts.	FY 07-10	L	Zoning Bylaw Task Force
HC-11	<i>Improve the gateways to Orleans by improving landscaping & screening and removing sign clutter at Skaket Corners and the Eastham rotary.</i>	<i>Addressed See Appendix</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>Parks & Beaches Department</i>
HC-12	<i>Develop a working relationship with ComElectric to revisit the issue of relocating the substation at Skaket Corners and to ensure that future facilities do not adversely impact the character of the community.</i>	<i>Addressed See Appendix</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Board of Selectmen</i>

HC-13	<i>Review and alter regulations for lighting to reduce glare, eliminate spillage, and eliminate excess lighting.</i>	<i>Addressed See Appendix</i>	L	<i>Zoning Bylaw Task Force</i>
HC-14	Amend Zoning Bylaws to require underground wiring for all new businesses and dwellings, regardless of whether they are in new subdivisions.	FY 07-10	L	Zoning Bylaw Task Force
HC-15	Review sign regulations to ensure that the number, size, location, style, and illumination of signs are in scale and compatible with the character of the area in which they are located.	FY 07-10	L	Zoning Bylaw Task Force
HC-16	Work with landowners in the Industrial District to revise standards for landscape design and the screening of loading and storage areas, to improve the appearance of the district.	FY 07-10	L	Planning Board
HC-17	In cooperation with property owners, develop a landscape improvement program along the Route 6A corridor.	FY 07-10	M	Planning Department
HC-18	<i>Adopt a set of guidelines for any proposed alterations to Scenic Roads.</i>	<i>Addressed See Appendix</i>	L	<i>Planning Board</i>
HC-19	<i>Establish a Town policy to define and protect vista views</i>	<i>Addressed See Appendix</i>	L	<i>Board of Selectmen</i>
HC-20	Draft policies and design guidelines for development and redevelopment of South Orleans and East Orleans business districts using the Cape Cod Commission's Designing the Future to Honor the Past for guidance.	FY 07-10	L	Planning Board
HC-21	Amend the Zoning Bylaw to prohibit future strip commercial development.	FY 07-10	L	Zoning Bylaw Task Force
HC-22	Consider adopting a Town bylaw to protect archeological resources from the impacts of future development. The Historical Commission should review subdivision applications to determine if the proposal is located on or near a known archeological resource.	FY 07-10	L	Historical Commission
HC-23	Secure a lot or site where the storage of historic structures would be appropriate and would save them from demolition	FY 07-10	H	Board of Selectmen