

Can I Register My Home as an Historic Place?

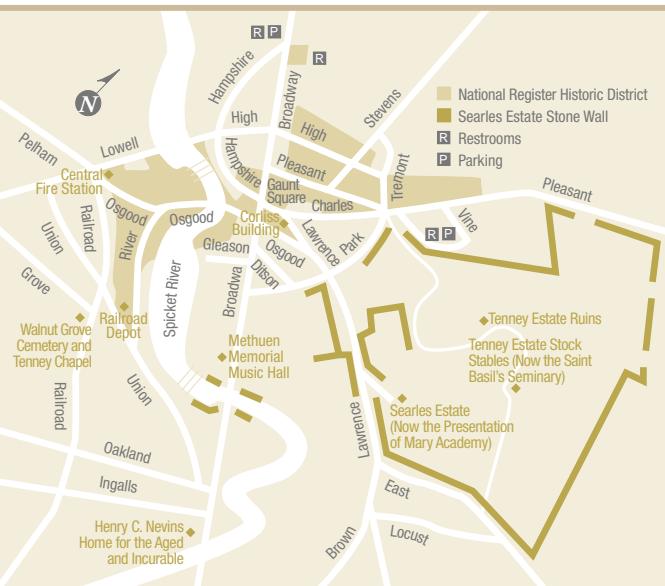
After you read about your historic home you may wish to send for an individualized certificate that states that your home is in the National Register of Historic Places. To do this, send a letter to: National Register Director Massachusetts Historical Commission 220 Morrissey Blvd., Boston, MA 02125

Give the original owner's name, and the particular historic district (i.e. Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District) in which your home is located. The Massachusetts Historical Commission will send you the document once they have authenticated the information. The procedure only applies to residents of historic districts.

What if I Have Questions?

The Historic District Commission hopes that you have found the information in this brochure to be useful. We believe in the value of Methuen's unique identity and are committed to helping resident/owner homeowners enjoy living in the District. If you have any questions about your home and Methuen's Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District, please call the City of Methuen Community Development Office at (978) 794-3231.

Methuen Historic District



Office of the Mayor
The Searles Building
41 Pleasant Street
Methuen, Massachusetts 01844

DISCOVER The Historic District Methuen, Massachusetts



Putting it All Together.





Methuen. So Much to Share.

*A testament
to the cultural
foresight of the
past and the
wealth within
the city, the
medieval-style
walls, turrets,
and towers
unite the city;
and shape
the character,
activities, and
landscape of
the community.*

Welcome to the Searles Tenney Nevins Historic District, established by the City of Methuen. Our intent is to preserve the distinctive architecture and rich character established by our city fathers, Edward F. Searles, Charles H. Tenney, and David C. Nevins. Under their influence, Methuen has developed much of its unique identity.

What is Methuen's History?

From the grandiose architecture of the Searles Estate to the modest Mill Housing on Railroad and Lowell Streets, Methuen embodies a history of contrasting lifestyles. Methuen's downtown represents a chronological history of 19th century American architecture. In 1826, Methuen Company developed its first large-scale textile mill using the 40-foot drop in the Spicket River Falls to generate power. The legacy of our city's forefathers includes the Red Tavern, Methuen Memorial Music Hall, the Searles Building, Presentation of Mary Academy and Nevins Memorial Library.

Why Do We Have Historic Districts?

Historic Districts have three major purposes as stated in Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws:

- To preserve and protect the distinctive characteristics of the buildings and places significant to the history of the Commonwealth's cities and towns.
- To maintain and improve the settings of those buildings and places.
- To encourage compatibility with existing buildings when new buildings are planned within the district.

Historic District Commissions do not prevent changes from occurring, nor do they prevent new construction. Their purpose is to ensure that changes and additions are harmonious, and to prevent changes that might detract from the aesthetic and historic values of the district. The Commission does not halt growth, but allows for the careful consideration of change. A local historic district is not meant to be burdensome to property owners, but is established to administer change and enhance the value of the district.

Who is on the Historic District Commission?

The Commission consists of seven members and three alternate members appointed by the Mayor to a term of three years. Under a specific set of regulations and guidelines, the Commission deals with exterior architectural changes. The Commission is required by law to review the appropriateness of most exterior design changes, additions, new construction and demolition.

Does Historic Districting Affect My Property Value?

Your decision to purchase a property in the historic district was a sound financial move. Historic districting helps to protect property values and local merchants' investments. Studies by the National Trust for Historic Preservation have shown that historic districting brings consistency to the maintenance of property values. In historic districts throughout the country, realtors report that preservation and conservation efforts, supported by historic designation or individual properties, actually increase property values.

What if I Want to Make Changes to My Home?

Any owner/resident within the district contemplating work on any part of his/her property that is "visible from a public way" should notify the Historic District Commission by filing an application for work or building.

- Work includes any alterations, rebuilding, new construction, restoration, removal, demolition or changes in exterior composition.
- Building refers to a combination of materials forming a shelter for persons, animals or property.
- The Historic District Guidelines include, but are not limited to, architectural style, general arrangement and setting, building materials, style of windows, lights, signs and other exterior features.
- Only exterior property changes that are visible from a street or public place are included.
- Occupancy, usage and other zoning issues are not reviewed, nor are any interior alterations.

How Do I File an Application?

No building or demolition permit may be granted for exterior work in the district without a certificate from the Historic District Commission.

- Applications should be obtained from the Department of Economic and Community Development at the Searles Building, 41 Pleasant St., Methuen, MA 01844
- The Commission recommends that applications be submitted 60-90 days prior to the commencement of any project.
- Completed applications should be returned to the Department of Economic and Community Development a minimum of 14 days prior to the regularly scheduled meeting of the Historic District Commission (generally the 3rd Thursday of the month).
- Completed applications must include photographs, material and color samples, manufacturers illustrations, plans and elevations, shop drawings, and site or plot plans.