

# Historic & Cultural Resources



TOWN OF COHASSET 2019 MASTER PLAN



## Introduction

The Town's name comes from the word Quonahassit or Conahasset, which means "long rocky place." Conahasset refers both to the name of the Native American settlement on the rocky ledges of the shoreline as well as to its inhabitants, who spoke Algonquin and were members of the larger Massachusog and Wampanog tribes.

Captain John Smith was the first European to enter the area when he sailed into the harbor in 1614. In the ensuing decades, settlers of Hingham harvested hay from the area's salt marshes. In 1670 Hingham "proprietors" divided the land into parcels which were given to people to create homesteads and farms. The salt marsh and the area that is now the Town Common were designated as communal property. In 1714 the first meetinghouse was built on the Town Common and was replaced by the current First Parish Meeting House in 1747. By 1770 the growing population wanted separation from Hingham, and Cohasset became its own town.

The mid-1800's marked a turning point for Cohasset. The fishing industry peaked in the 1850's, went into a steep decline, and nearly vanished by 1880. In 1851 a major storm washed away the dunes that had formerly separated Little Harbor from the ocean, flooding the area's 91 acres of communal grazing land with saltwater that quickly became stagnant. Residents were then forced to open up a permanent connection to the sea creating a large body of water and a haven for migratory birds and wildlife.

Furthering the Town's development, the South Shore Railroad arrived in 1849, opening it up to seasonal visitors. Although Cohasset had been home to the Red Lion Inn since the late 1700's, more boarding houses and hotels sprang up. By the late 1880's technological innovations in plumbing enabled fresh water to be delivered to the rocky shoreline, an area that was not conducive to farming, but would soon witness the development of "summer cottages." These stately homes built with intricate details spanned various architectural styles of the day many of them still stand today.

After World War II, the Town experienced another surge in development, this time of permanent residences for returning veterans. Many of the summer cottages were converted into year-round homes, and the Town began its transition to becoming a suburb of Boston. Residents expanded the number of annual cultural events, and institutions grew and strengthened to support a robust artistic and civic life.

## Key Findings

- Cohasset will celebrate and commemorate its 250th anniversary in 2020 with a variety of community activities. First settled in 1670, a century later, the Town separated from Hingham, Cohasset's subsequent growth as vibrant community centered around the Village and Harbor, Beechwood and North Cohasset with year-round residents who worked in local industries such as agriculture and fishing.
- More than 2,200 historical properties have been inventoried and a significant number of historic properties have been preserved and well maintained, but a demolition delay, affirmative maintenance bylaw, and other recommendations could help ensure that the historic town centers continue to exist.
- A variety of longstanding cultural activities and annual traditions continue to operate in the Town, but more could be done to cross-promote and highlight complementary resources during those events

## **Assets**

Residents of Cohasset have demonstrated a deep pride in their historic structures, cultural heritage, and annual traditions. The history of the town's residents and the landscape they shaped is documented in three volumes of the Narrative History of Cohasset, which trace its development from the last ice age to the year 2000.

The Town's historical assets and natural landscape have been preserved by dedicated community members and the organizations they have established. For the past 90

years the Cohasset Historical Society has preserved and promoted the history of the town through its acquisition and conservation of historic properties, sensitively converting them into museums, historic homes, and archival institutions. Town committees such as the Community Preservation Committee, the Historic Commission, and the Cohasset Common Historic District Commission play important roles in preserving and improving historical structures and open space. Residents have also been entrepreneurial and collaborative in supporting a network of organizations such as the Cohasset Conservation Trust, the Trustees of Reservations, the newly reconstituted Harbor Committee, and several civic organizations to preserve the natural landscape of the Town.



**Cohasset Town Common**

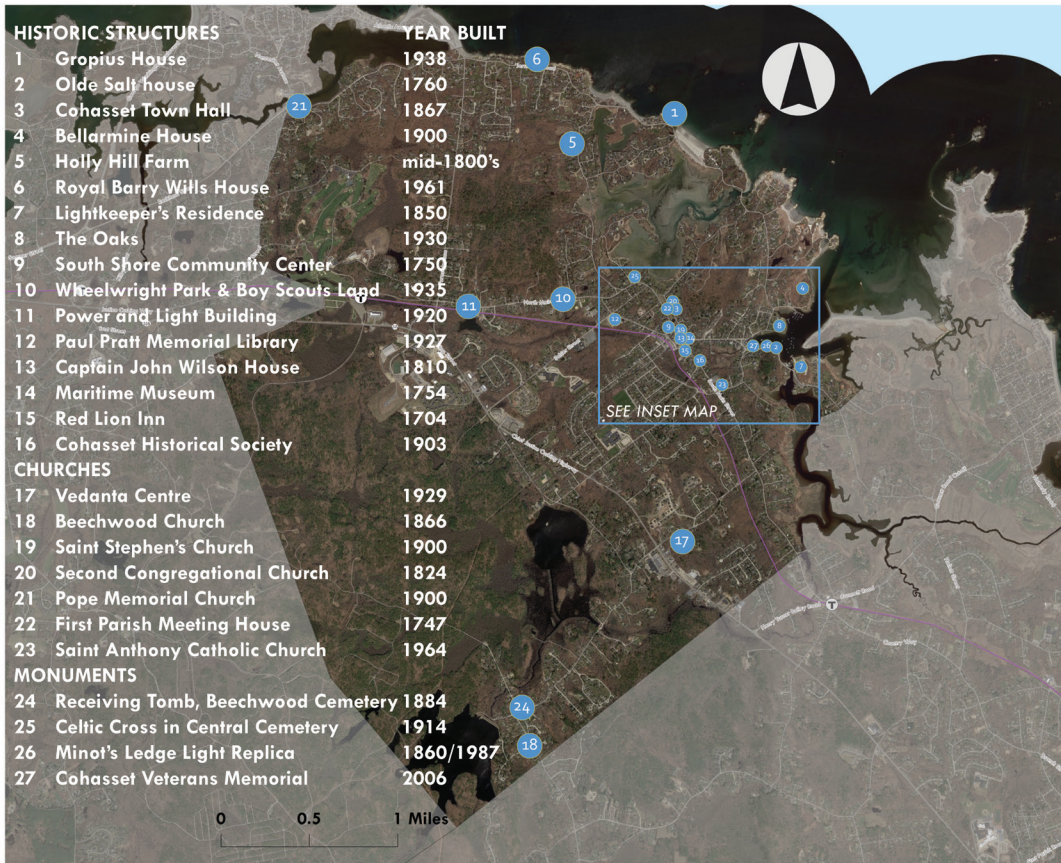
The number and quality of historical assets in Cohasset are impressive. The Town Common, the last remaining piece of undivided common land in Massachusetts that dates back to the Colonial era, maintains an array of historic properties along its perimeter making it one of the best-preserved town commons in the Commonwealth. Residential buildings line North Main Street along the Common. The South Shore Community Center and the Carriage House Nursery School occupy two of these buildings. Along Highland Avenue to the east, the Town Hall and Second Congregational Church provide anchors to the residential buildings on either side. The First Parish Meeting House is the only building that occupies space at the center of the Common. Further west in Town, are the historic Beechwood Church, cemetery, and neighborhood. Lastly, many structures within the Government Island Historic District are historically significant, including the Lightkeeper's Residence, the engineer's office once used for Minot's Ledge Lighthouse, a fuel-storage building, and the Minot's Light replica.

Residents have also maintained a variety of cultural events that attract visitors and provide cultural enrichment for the local community. The Carillon Concert Series has been running annually for over 90 years, and the South Shore Music Circus has been programming events for nearly that long. The South Shore Arts Festival has become a regional institution. And events such as the Little League Parade, the Jingle Bell Walk, and the Memorial Day and 4th of July Parade provide annual opportunities for the community to connect. During the past twenty years, the community has continued to expand seasonal events that promote the Town's local resources such as the Farmer's Market, the Cohasset Road Race by the Sea, and the Cohasset Triathlon. Additionally, the Town is preparing to celebrate its 250th anniversary. These cultural activities provide a historical connection to the Town's past as a regional hub for summer programming and artistic expression, attracting local and regional audiences.

# Maps of Existing Resources

## Historical Sites

Includes structures, churches, and monuments



Data compiled from the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS), Joy Pratt, Chairman of 250th Anniversary Steering Committee, and Town Planner, Peter Matchak. This list is not a complete inventory of every historical structure; rather it is meant indicate the variety of historical resources in Cohasset.



Figure 39: Historical Sites

## Historical Sites

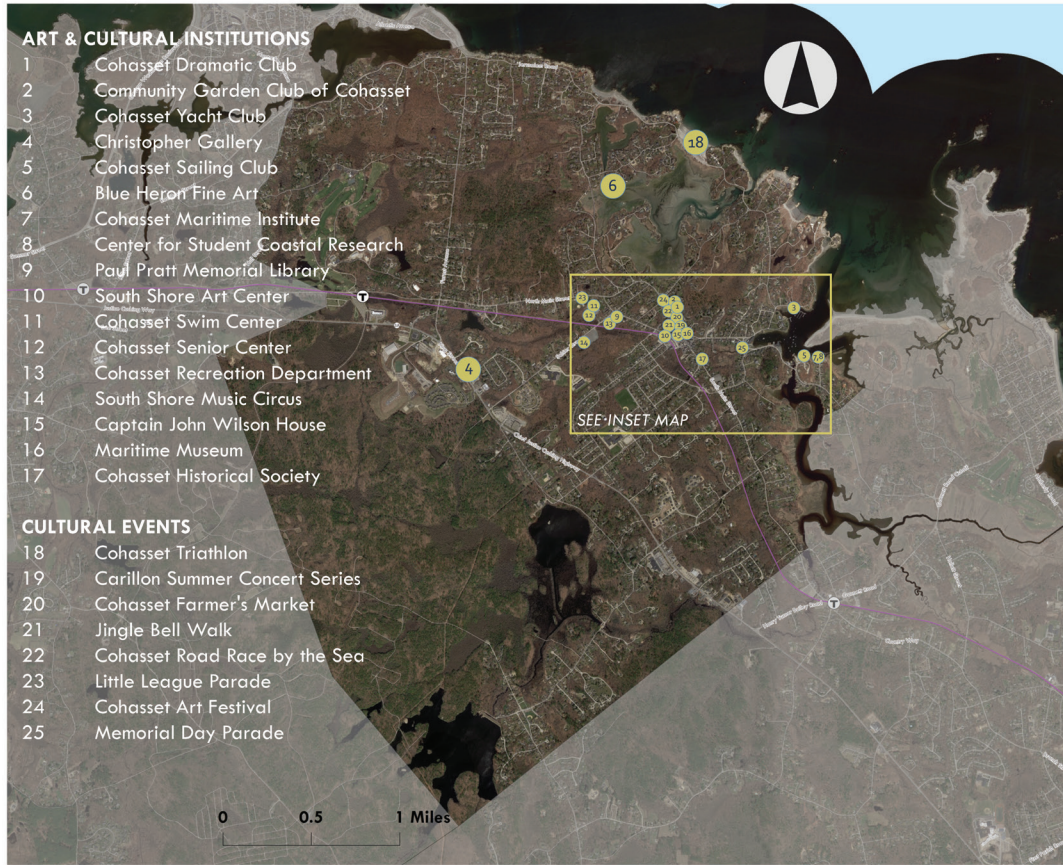
Includes structures, churches, and monuments

<b>HISTORIC STRUCTURES</b>		<b>ADDRESS</b>	<b>YEAR BUILT</b>
1	Gropius House	357 Atlantic Ave	1938
2	Olde Salt house	40 Border Street	1760
3	Cohasset Town Hall	41 Highland Ave.	1867
4	Bellarmino House	150 Howard Gleason Road	1900
5	Holly Hill Farm	236 Jerusalem Road	mid-1800's
6	Royal Barry Wills House	419 Jerusalem Road	1961
7	Lightkeepers House	15 Lighthouse Lane	1850
8	The Oaks	49 Margin Street	1930
9	South Shore Community Center	3 North Main Street	1750
10	Wheelwright Park & Boy Scouts Land	202 North Main Street	1935
11	Power and Light Building	365 North Main Street	1920
12	Paul Pratt Memorial Library	35 Ripley Road	1927
13	Captain John Wilson House	4 South Main Street	1810
14	Maritime Museum	26 South Main Street	1754
15	Red Lion Inn	71 South Main Street	1705
16	Cohasset Historical Society	106 South Main Street	1903
<b>CHURCHES</b>			
17	Vedanta Centre	130 Beechwood Street	1929
18	Beechwood Church	51 Church Street	1866
19	Saint Stephen's Church	16 Highland Ave	1900
20	Second Congregational Church	43 Highland Ave	1824
21	Pope Memorial Church	811 Jerusalem Road	1900
22	First Parish Unitarian Church	23 North Main Street	1747
23	Saint Anthony Catholic Church	10 Summer Street	1964
<b>MONUMENTS</b>			
24	Receiving Tomb at Beechwood Cemetery	67 Doane Street	1884
25	Celtic Cross in Central Cemetery	1 Joy Street	1914
26	Minor's Ledge Light Replica	19 Lighthouse Lane	1860/1987
27	World War I Memorial	10 North Main Street	2006

Figure 40: Historical Sites Key

## Cultural Sites

Includes arts and cultural institutions and events



Data compiled from the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS), Joy Pratt, Chairman of 250th Anniversary Steering Committee, and Town Planner, Peter Matchak. This list is not a complete inventory of every cultural institution and event in Cohasset; rather it is meant to indicate the variety of cultural resources in Cohasset.

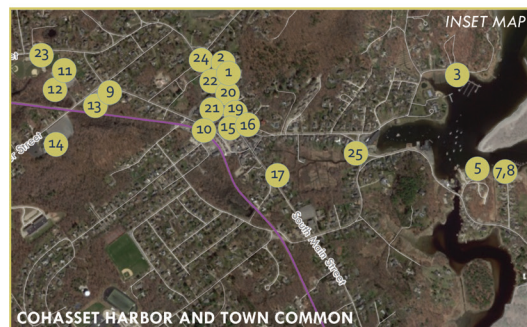


Figure 41: Cultural Sites

## Cultural Sites

Includes arts and cultural institutions and events

### ART & CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

1	Cohasset Dramatic Club
2	Community Garden Club of Cohasset
3	Cohasset Yacht Club
4	Christopher Gallery
5	Cohasset Sailing Club
6	Blue Heron Fine Art
7	Cohasset Maritime Institute
8	Center for Student Coastal Research
9	Paul Pratt Memorial Library
10	South Shore Art Center
11	Cohasset Swim Center
12	Cohasset Senior Center
13	Cohasset Recreation Department
14	South Shore Music Circus
15	Captain John Wilson House
16	Maritime Museum
17	Cohasset Historical Society

### ADDRESS

41	Highland Ave.
43	Highland Ave
99	Howard Gleason Road
130	King Road
19	Lighthouse Lane
31	Nichols Road
40	Parker Ave.
40	Parker Ave.
35	Ripley Road
119	Ripley Road
89	Sohier Road
91	Sohier Road
100	Sohier Road
130	Sohier Road
4	South Main Street
26	South Main Street
106	South Main Street

### CULTURAL EVENTS

18	Cohasset Triathlon
19	Carillon Summer Concert Series
20	Cohasset Farmer's Market
21	Jingle Bell Walk
22	Cohasset Road Race by the Sea
23	Little League Parade
24	Cohasset Art Festival
25	Memorial Day Parade

Figure 42: Cultural Sites Key



## Opportunities

While residents in Cohasset take pride in the historic nature of the Town, recent developments pose challenges to preserving its historic character. The reconstruction of the Greenbush commuter rail line to Boston has renewed a connection for people to commute to the Town, not just to visit, but to live and work. Sewer capacity and regional sewer expansion, as well as innovations in building technology, are opening up parcels of land to development that were previously unbuildable.

The attractiveness of the Town has led to an increase in land value, which makes the area appealing to developers. A new era of construction has taken root where large homes have been constructed on relatively small lots in highly visible locations. Old-growth trees and historic rock ledges have been demolished in the process, resulting in dramatic changes to the landscape. The development of these new single-family homes and other developments has created a sense that the Town is being overbuilt. The recent demolition of an historic home on the Town Common has renewed interest in developing creative strategies to preserve and maintain historic properties. Although a Demolition Bylaw was defeated as recently as 2005, residents have expressed an interest in returning to this effort as well as implementing complementary strategies.

Documentation of the Town's historic properties has created interest in preserving in them. Furthermore, the historic consistency of the built environment may be maintained through the enactment of regulatory guidelines that include design standards. Additionally, more programs could be developed by the Historical Society, the Historical Commission, and the Cohasset Common Historic District Commission to connect town residents who are interested in preserving the historic character of their homes with information and coordinated planning efforts to celebrate the Town's rich history and cultural heritage.

Residents have also expressed a desire for more biking and walking trails that would connect clusters of historic resources, such as from the Town Center to the Harbor, Sandy Beach, and the Commuter Rail Station. Trail networks are discussed in more detail in the Transportation and Circulation chapter of this plan.



## Historic and Cultural Resources

### Existing Conditions

#### EARLY HISTORY: NATIVE AMERICAN SETTLERS – PRE-HISTORY – 1849

Cohasset's rocky shoreline stands out from the marshy shores to the north and south, leading to development patterns that are connected to the Town's neighbors but stand out in unique ways. The granite ledge at or below the surface made the land tough for farming and for home construction. As a result the area was not as immediately settled as Hingham to the north or Scituate and Plymouth to the south, but the Town grew as a mid-point between the two.

#### EARLY INHABITANTS

Cohasset's earliest inhabitants, the Conahasset, camped along the area's rocky ledges each summer to fish and live off the land. Evidence suggests that the area currently



Buildings are perched along Cohasset's rocky coast



known as Quarry Point was a popular location for these seasonal settlements. In winter, the native peoples moved inland where the winds were calmer and where they could hunt game and live off the nuts and vegetables they had collected in the warmer months.

### ON THE ROAD TO BECOMING A TOWN

People of European descent first used the land that is now Cohasset for grazing and the cultivation of hay. After the land was divided into parcels in 1680, settlers started to create permanent residences along Main Street, which served as the highway between Hingham and Scituate villages. One such house, which was built in 1704, was eventually converted into an inn by the builder's great-grandson Christopher James. The Red Lion Inn still operates on that same site today.



Red Lion Inn

### THE COMMON COMES INTO FORMATION

The original settlement patterns and land division of 1680 also shaped the Town Common which has retained many of its original buildings and historic character. Since it was originally designated as a communal "plain," people were encouraged to develop properties around it that reflected the popular styles of the day, including Federal, Georgian, Colonial, Italianate Victorian, and Classical Revival. Today the area is designated as the Cohasset Common Historic District that includes the First Parish Meeting House, the Second Congregational Church, the South Shore Community Center, and the Town Hall, making it one of the finest examples of early New England village greens.



First Parish Meeting House across the Common

### INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE TAKE ROOT

During this early period of development, people tapped into the natural resources of the area to build industrial and agricultural facilities that are still in existence today. The Olde Salt House, a Colonial wood structure that is featured prominently on Border Street, was constructed in 1760 as either a cooper's shop or a warehouse for salt which was harvested from evaporated seawater on the nearby shores. It was part



The Olde Salt House

of a complex of buildings built by Samuel Bates which included a wharf that is still in use by commercial fishermen today, and the buildings have been converted into a popular restaurant. Likewise areas that began to be farmed in this early period are still in active use. While the land that encompasses Holly Hill Farm was likely farmed in the 1700's, credit to its conception goes to Henry Doane. Doane sold the original homestead to Thomas Richardson, who married into the White family in the mid-1800's. The White family continues to operate the land as an organic farm and runs an educational programs and a farm stand.

## **COUNTRY VILLAGES EMERGE**

As settlers built out the areas around Main Street and the waterfront, settlers started to branch out and create country villages in the rural parts of town. The Beechwood neighborhood remained a vibrant village center for the surrounding community of farmers and other skilled workers until small farming became unprofitable in the 1970's. Until then the community made steady progress in developing its farmland and physical structures as well as hyperlocal community traditions. The earliest burials in the Beechwood Cemetery go back to 1734.

Because of its distance to the Town Common, and the church there, a Parish was established in Beechwood in about 1860. In 1866 the Beechwood Church was constructed, obtaining half its funds from the town, and the other sources coming from the community as well as neighboring churches in Cohasset, Hingham and Scituate.

By 1950 Beechwood was a self-contained village center. In addition to the church and cemetery, it supported a general store, post office, fire station, ballfield, library and community center. In addition to fostering traditional sports and recreation, the tight-knit community developed unique annual traditions such as turtle races and annual bonfires on July 3rd. As each village center built robust physical spaces, so too did they develop local economies and social practices.

## **THE TOWN BEGINS TO TAKE SHAPE - 1849-1953**

By the mid-1850's the railroad had arrived, and with it the population surged, especially in the summer months. Wealthy Bostonians escaped the hot city and flocked to the Town. They erected large homes on the rock ledges overlooking the ocean where they could benefit from the cool breeze. This oceanfront property also provided unobstructed views of migratory birds, so those lucky enough to stay until the fall could go coot hunting, competing for the most birds felled in one day. To service all of these



**Queen Anne style summer cottage perched on a granite ledge off Jerusalem Road**

new residents, public works were built and civic organizations were established (such as the Yacht Club, the Music Circus, the Fire Department and more), forming the backbone of the Town's civic life and inspiring the growth and development of new public amenities.

## **THE ERA OF THE SUMMER COLONY**

Cohasset is endowed with a large number of impressive structures from the era of Victorian "summer cottages," many of which have since been converted into permanent residences. A large

concentration of these homes are located around Jerusalem Road, Atlantic Avenue, and the Harbor. Many were designed by the most prominent architects of the day, such as George Newton, who designed Torrebianca, an extravagant villa on Atlantic Avenue, J.A. Schweinfurththe, who designed a home at 215 Atlantic Avenue, H.H. Richardson, who designed Bellarmine House on Cohasset Harbor, as well as landscape designs by Frederick Law Olmsted. Architectural innovation continued into the modern period when Walter Gropius was commissioned to design a signature property near Sandy Beach in 1938.

### MINOT'S LEDGE

1849 was not only the year the railroad came to town, it was also the year of the horrific sinking of a ship on the Grampus Ledges where nearly 100 Irish immigrants perished within sight of their final destination in America. The first lighthouse on the submerged ledge was built the following year, but in 1851 it fell into the ocean during a storm. In 1855 construction began on a new, granite lighthouse that still stands today. The signature flash pattern from the Lighthouse is 1-4-3, which has the same numerical count as "I love you," giving rise to its nickname "Lover's Light."

Supporting the lighthouse is a series of buildings which were erected at the same time comprising a mainland station that is currently designated as the Government Island National Historic District. Some of these buildings include the Lightkeeper's Residence, Minot's Light Watch Room Replica, and an oil storage building that dates from around 1900.

### MEETING HOUSES

In the mid-1850's and again around 1900, a suite of meeting houses were erected in Cohasset. In 1857 the Town Hall was built on the Town Common. This space has supported numerous civic and cultural activities, from town meetings to theatrical performances by Humphrey Bogart and more recently by the Cohasset Dramatic Club, which is currently celebrating its 96th year. In 1866 residents in the Beechwood section of town erected a church so they too could have a meeting space in their area.

1900 saw the erection of two stately stone churches – Saint Stephen's Church on the Town Common, and the Pope Memorial Church (currently named the Panagia Greek Orthodox Church) at the end of Jerusalem Road. Cohasset's peaceful landscape also gave rise to the Vedanta Society which established a non-denominational retreat in the Town in 1929. These places of worship have also become hubs of cultural activity.

### CELEBRATING THE OUTDOORS

As people enjoyed their summers in Cohasset, they also began to establish institutions to support their lives outdoors. Both the Yacht Club and Golf Club were established in 1894. Additionally the Works Progress Administration helped build Wheelwright Park as one of only a handful of sites on the South



Minot's Ledge Lighthouse



Lightkeeper's Residence



Cohasset Town Hall

Shore that were built during the New Deal. Since that time even more land has been added to the park by various owners and operators, reinforcing Cohasset's commitment to natural preservation and conservation.



Entrance to Wheelwright Park from North Main Street

## **CIVIC LIFE ARISES: 1952 – PRESENT**

### **BECOMING A BEDROOM COMMUNITY**

By the end of the Korean War, the Town of Cohasset began to transition to a bedroom community. While a small fishing industry, agricultural, and summer colony continued to operate as before, the Town increased its population in the post-World War II era. Summer cottages and other buildings were adapted into year-round residences, historic preservation emerged as a priority, and additional cultural institutions sprang up to provide cultural enrichment for local residents.



Italian Renaissance Revival summer cottage that has been converted into a year-round residence

### **PARLORS TO BEDROOMS**

By the 1950's construction of grandiose summer cottages began to give way to a new, more modest style of housing for returning veterans. The houses built on the streets adjacent to Cohasset High School marked a shift from the past in terms of their size and level of detail.



Cape house designed by Royal Barry Wills

Many of the architecturally significant buildings constructed during this period reflect a movement towards a simpler local lifestyle. Architect Royal Barry Wills designed numerous homes in Cohasset in his signature Cape house style, one of which still stands today on Jerusalem Road. More recently the historic Power and Light Building which used to power all the street lights in Cohasset, was converted into a home with a studio and sculpture garden. The renovation of this notable building on the edge of Sanctuary Pond is a prime example of the ways in which historic buildings may be adapted to modern times with new additions that respect and preserve their historic integrity.

The most recent trend in home construction, however, seems to take more inspiration from the Victorian era. Modest houses are being replaced by large, luxurious homes in prominent locations.

### **PRESERVING HISTORY**

Historical preservation has increasingly become a priority for Cohasset residents throughout this contemporary period of development. While the Cohasset Historical Society was established in 1928, it was not until more recent times that the organization acquired its four properties and converted them into their headquarters, an historic home, and two museums.

During this period the Town moved to create numerous historic districts of varying types. The Cohasset Common Historic District is a local historical district. Government Island was designated a National



Adaptive reuse of 1930's Power and Light Building

Historic District, and the Cohasset Central Cemetery was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2002. Since the Cohasset Common Historic District has a local historic designation, only properties within those boundaries are restricted to the bylaws as laid out by the Local Historic District Commission. However, all of these designations portray a deep respect for the character of the Town and provide a means for historic preservation.

### CONNECTING TO THE SEA

Interest in associating with the Town's heritage is evident in the rise of organizations that connect people to the water through educational and recreational activities. In 1970 the Sailing Club joined the Yacht Club as another resource to teach town residents how to sail. The Maritime Institute, which began in 1994, provides rowing and ship-building opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. And in 2000, the Center for Student Coastal Research was established to explore the scientific significance of the Cohasset watershed.



Recently constructed new Victorian style summer cottage on Jerusalem Road

### ARTISTIC INSPIRATION

Motivated by its magnificent ocean vistas, Cohasset has long been home to artists and has supported artistic expression. In the 1950's three local residents - Tom Lucas (an art teacher at Cohasset High), Maclvor Reddie (a local artist), and Helen Vosoff (the first president of the new South Shore Playhouse Associates) - met and began to organize a new art center in Cohasset. By 1955 the Art Center settled into its first home at 15 Brook Street, and the following year the founders organized the first South Shore Arts Festival, which has now been running for over 60 consecutive years. In 1958 the South Shore Art Center was officially incorporated as a non-profit, and by 1987 the organization had raised enough funds to construct the building in which they still operate today. Currently the Art Center boasts over 1200 members and attracts a regional population from the entire South Shore. Programs are offered throughout the year.



Captain John Wilson House on Elm Street

The South Shore Music Circus is also dedicated to supporting the arts, cultural, and educational institutions and was officially incorporated just prior to the South Shore Art Center. However, the Music Circus traces its roots further back to 1932, when Raymond Moore brought stage shows to the Cohasset Town Hall. The following year Alexander Dean took over and established the South Shore Players, bringing notable acts and stars of the era such as Humphrey Bogart, Sylvia Sydney, Thornton Wilder and Sinclair Lewis. By 1949 the Players had outgrown their home in the Town Hall and in 1951 they set up a tent on former horse show grounds to house their productions. Upgrades were made to the tent in 1977 and



Beechwood Church

again in 1994 to provide state of the art lighting and sound design for 1,000-3,000 audience members seated in the round.

### CIVIC LIFE CONTINES TO BLOSSOM

A variety of civic spaces and events keeps Cohasset residents busy with seasonal activities throughout the year. The Cohasset Swim Center was established in 1975 to provide yet another water-based activity for local residents. The Senior Center was built near the Swim Center in 2014. The Cohasset Recreation Department was also moved to the former Joseph Osgood School after the building had been converted into the Pratt Memorial Library in 2003. The Pratt Memorial Library provides the community with a wide variety of programming for adults, young adults, and children year round.

In addition to these permanent civic spaces, events consistently bring the Town – especially its youngest members – together for annual traditions. Cohasset has celebrated Memorial Day with not only a community parade participated in by veterans, youth organizations and local citizens, but also more recently a healing field of flags by the War Memorial near the harbor. The Little League Parade draws families each year to watch their youngsters parade through town in their uniforms. And for the past 23 years, Santa has arrived on a signature lobster boat for the Jingle Bell Walk from the Harbor to the South Shore Community Center.

The community continues to add activities which provide great season opportunities for residents. At twenty-two years running, the Farmer’s Market is a relatively new



Cohasset Maritime Institute



Packed house at the South Shore Music Circus



Bell Walk



South Shore Community Center



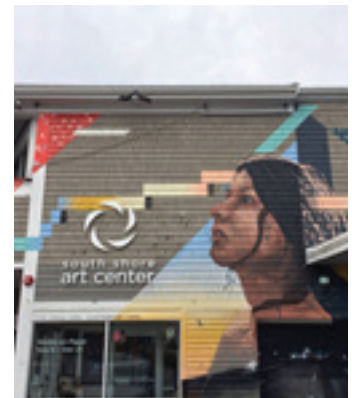
Outdoor performance on Town Common

in addition to the annual calendar in Cohasset. The Triathlon and the Cohasset Road Race by the Sea provide further recreational opportunities for people to enjoy the area’s scenic beauty.

Even Hollywood has taken note of Cohasset’s historical assets and natural beauty by shooting three feature films in the town: *The Witches of Eastwick* (1987), starring Cher, Susan Sarandon, Michelle Pfeiffer, and Jack Nicholson; *Housesitter* (1992), starring Goldie Hawn and Steve Martin; and *The Finest Hours* (2016) starring Chris Pine, Casey Affleck, and Eric Bana.



Sandy beach on a warm weekday evening



South Shore Art Center

## **Historic & Cultural Resources Goals and Recommendations**

Cohasset could enhance its cultural and historical resources through a series of recommendations which may be summarized in the following four goals:

### **Goal 1: Preserve the historic residential character of Cohasset**

Cohasset is defined by its residential character set in scenic beauty. The natural and built landscape are intertwined in a way that residents may maintain one by preserving the other.

#### **Strategy 1.1: Celebrate the Town’s comprehensive historical record**

- Continue to inventory structures that retain historic character and significance. Cohasset has inventoried more than 2,200 historic properties on an online database on MACRIS website. An expanded version of Cohasset’s Heritage Trail booklet will be available for the 250th anniversary of the Town.
- Establish a validation program for historic homes. Retaining historic architectural character will help celebrate exemplary landowners and spread best-practices.
- Establish a consistent, opt-in signage program for historic properties. Property owners can celebrate the historic character of their buildings, and provide a signal to potential developers to consider historic character in new developments.

### **Strategy 1.2: Establish vision and priorities to guide historic preservation planning efforts**

- Adopt guiding principles for preservation. Defining values and gaining consensus on a vision will help ensure that historic preservation is valued by the majority of Town residents.
- Develop criteria for evaluating preservation priorities. This will create a standardized process to assess the historic significance of historic properties.
- Incentivize preservation of historic structures along scenic byways. This will focus historic preservation in high visibility locations and help preserve the character of the Town.

### **Strategy 1.3: Strengthen the Local Historic District Commission with the adoption of additional bylaws such as an Affirmative Maintenance Bylaw**

The purpose of such a bylaw is to ensure that property owners maintain their properties to a minimal standard so they will not fall into disrepair.

### **Strategy 1.4: Establish a Demolition Delay Bylaw.**

Bylaws may be enacted for 6, 12, 18, or 24 month periods, providing time for a more thorough assessment of a property's historical significance.

### **Strategy 1.5: Explore the expansion of the Local Historic District**

This could ensure that additional properties are protected, and maintain high historic standards for redevelopment.

## **Goal 2: Develop additional local capacity to manage and enhance historic and cultural resources**

Residents of the Town have made concerted efforts in preserving the historic and cultural resources, but more could be done to create partnerships to leverage and strengthen these efforts.

### **Strategy 2.1: Expand partnerships among historic and cultural organizations through development of a Historic Preservation Plan**

A preservation plan will assist in identifying historic and cultural resources, assessing their current status and recognizing issues and opportunities to better protect those resources. Such a plan would include an inventory of important resources, review relevant local regulations, assessment of management issues regarding those resources, and the creation of an action plan to implement recommendations. A Historic Preservation Plan can create more collaboration among local organizations and can identify concrete strategies to ensure historic properties are well prioritized for preservation. Hanover and Sandwich have recently prepared such plans.

### **Strategy 2.2: Implement new partnerships among organizations within historic and cultural asset clusters for programming, maintenance, fundraising and promotion**

Cohasset maintains numerous cultural organizations with overlapping missions, so carrying out



collaborative projects (such as planning for the 250th anniversary) may help define roles for each organization.

### **Strategy 2.3: Establish programs such as land alteration management to prevent clear cutting and the alteration of natural rock ledges**

### **Strategy 2.4: Expand Design Review Board purview to include residential properties**

The Design Review Board currently only has jurisdiction over commercial properties, so expanding their purview to residential properties would add a level of oversight to ensure that community character is taken into account in future developments.

## **Goal 3: Enhance Cohasset’s historic and cultural resources**

Cohasset has a wealth of historic and cultural resources that are presently undervalued by some in the Town. By following a series of recommendations, Cohasset residents may acquire new processes by which historic resources may not only be preserved and maintained, but appreciated and celebrated by all.

### **Strategy 3.1: Revitalize and restore Town Common to historic standards**

An updated plan can ensure that the Common remains relevant into the 21st Century by providing for the needs of passive recreation by Town residents while embedding the necessary resources (such as sprinkler systems and outdoor outlets) for the continued success of the Art Festival and other events.

### **Strategy 3.2: Continue Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding for maintenance and restoration of historic properties**

### **Strategy 3.3: Provide best practices information through the Town’s Historical Commission about how to research house histories.**

Links may be provided to the National Park Service Preservation Briefs, which offer detailed guidance in how to maintain historic properties: <https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve.htm>

### **Strategy 3.4: Review zoning in Cohasset Common Historic District**

Ensure that requirements respect historic building form, lot size, and lot layout. Using the recent demolition of an historic property on the Common as a case study, the Historic District bylaws may be amended to ensure a more thorough process for future renovation efforts. The Massachusetts Historical Commission has prepared a guidebook with numerous examples of zoning tools and techniques for historic preservation (Preservation Through Bylaws and Ordinances – 2009).

### **Strategy 3.5: Highlight historic and cultural resources during annual cultural events**

For example, the South Shore Arts Festival takes place on the historic Common, and additional signage may promote the Town’s historic character.

## **Goal 4: Enhance creative and cultural economic development**

Cohasset has numerous longstanding events and vital institutions that are known locally and regionally, but more could be done to elevate and cross-promote these resources.

### **Strategy 4.1: Celebrate the upcoming 250th anniversary by highlighting local cultural and historic resources**

Walking tours, publications, and other collateral can stand alone or function as a complement to preexisting cultural activities. Long after the anniversary is past, these publications may remain as resources for residents to learn about the Town.

### **Strategy 4.2: Explore economic development strategies that highlight local artists and food producers**

For example, the Town can host an annual Harbor Festival that celebrates the working harbor, farms, and local food systems.

### **Strategy 4.3: Develop a process to establish a cultural district**

Such districts can be created by working with the Massachusetts Cultural Council, which allows the Town to take advantage of technical assistance and grants. This process will ensure that cultural resources are mapped and valued as a crucial element of the Town.

### **Strategy 4.4: Commemorate notable historic achievements**

Unique, long-running events such as the Carillon Concert Series not only increase Town pride but may become opportunities to increase the visibility of the Town's cultural assets.