

*Town of Coventry
South Coventry Village*

Plan of Preservation and Development

AUGUST, 2012

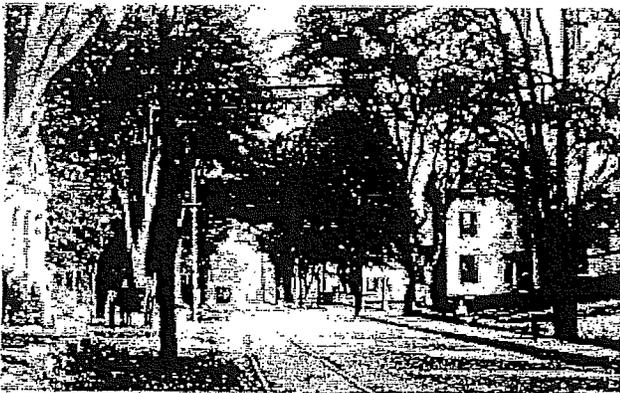


Prepared by the Coventry Land Use Office
Based on the 1990 "Preservation Plan for Coventry Village",
prepared by the Preservation Planning Associates, CT Main
Street Resource Team and CVMSP
Plan of Preservation & Development - 2005

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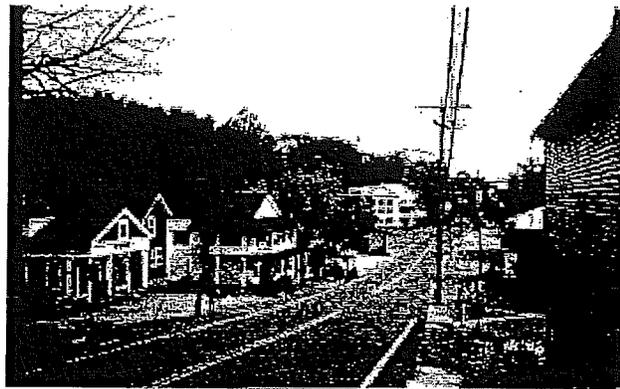
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Appendix I- Specific Site Recommendations



Main Street looking south to the Mason Street Intersection- late 1800's

Main Street today looking south at the Monument Hill Road intersection



INTRODUCTION

Mill Brook has been a main focus of Coventry Village's development since the first settlers built their homes near the Village Green on Lake Street in 1712. During the 19th century it became the centerpiece of one of the most vital small mill districts in New England, boasting 17 water power privileges along its 2-1/2 mile course. By the mid-20th century, most of the mills no longer survived, but the fabric of the Village has remained intact. Coventry Village today is an area of impressive architectural and natural beauty, retaining, to a high degree, the significant cultural assets associated with its 18th- and 19th-century life as an industrial mill village. A few wood framed 19th-century mills still stand along Mill Brook's banks, while the stone foundations of others are scattered nearby. Mill ponds with stone dams offer additional physical evidence of the area's once vital economic base. The old homes and buildings lining Main Street and side lanes help preserve the ambience of the community's past, and their high architectural quality suggests the Village's prominence and prosperity.

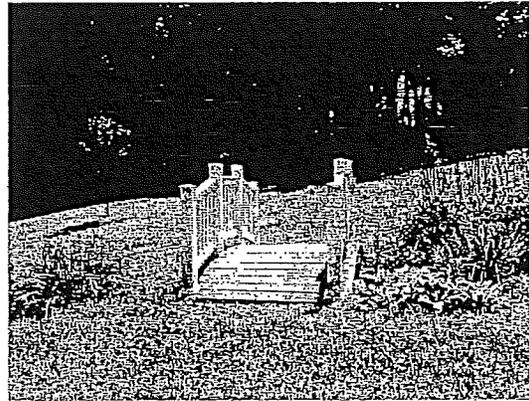
The landscape features of the area around Mill Brook also contribute in good measure to its significance. The rolling, even hilly, terrain is dramatic, descending into extensive wetlands, and crisscrossed by old stone walls. Taken together, these built and natural elements form a highly significant



interlocking environment that is worthy of preservation and careful planning for the future.

After almost a century of only modest growth and little change in overall land use patterns, the Town of Coventry and its historic Coventry Village are facing several forces for change. Located just east of the end of Route I-384, the town is a prime target for suburban expansion from Hartford. Since the small-scale farming which traditionally typified its economy has become less viable, the open fields are prey to subdivision, roadside commercial development, and new industrial growth. Coventry Village, with an installed sewer system and public water there is significant capacity for additional development.

The town is exploring ways to expand its tax base and effectively manage new growth; it has expressed a desire to preserve its rural character, architectural heritage, and the natural features which enhance them both. The challenge before the town is to balance and coordinate these objectives.



GOALS FOR COVENTRY VILLAGE

1. Preserve, Protect, and Enhance the Historic Character of the Village. The objective is to preserve the Village as a vital, living entity in the context of its significant history and architecture. Among the major components contributing to this image are the well-preserved buildings of high architectural quality, the surviving mills from the Village's thriving industrial era, and the physical layout of the Village, which retains much of its historical ambience. The Planning Zoning Commission adopted Village Zoning Regulations and Design Guidelines in 2006 to accomplish this goal. Town staff and the Commission continue to monitor the success of the Regulations/Guidelines and modify them as necessary.

2. Develop a Framework to allow for Future Economic Growth while Ensuring Historic Preservation. Mechanisms that should be identified include historic preservation and zoning techniques, appropriate public actions, financial tools, and development incentives. The Town must continue to monitor the success of the Village Zoning Regulations/Guidelines as well as the Investment Incentive Program, which allows for phased-in assessments for approved projects to encourage appropriate development. In addressing this objective, the town seeks to serve current residents while also recognizing the economic benefits of attracting a market from the wider region. This would include: Providing services not presently available such as a small market, professional services, etc. Developing more specialty uses such as antiques, craft shops, art galleries, and unique restaurants, creating opportunities for starter businesses, and providing for clustered residential growth either in the vacant mills or as combined residential/commercial buildings. Improve

pedestrian access and parking by incorporating the philosophy of complete streets.

3. Protect Natural Assets and Environmental Quality. The major natural asset is Mill Brook, Coventry Lake and associated watershed, which are also significant components of the Village's industrial heritage. The scenic vistas, stone walls, roadways, vegetation, rocky terrain, and open space are other important aspects of the setting. Environmental quality includes visual as well as safety factors, such as the elimination of hazardous wastes and blight sources. The town desires both to protect its natural assets and to seek appropriate ways to encourage improved recreational opportunities. The Town Blight Ordinance, adopted in 2010, can serve as a mechanism to accomplish this goal for Coventry Village.

4. Increase Public Awareness of Coventry Village's Resources. This objective has value both as a worthwhile end in itself and in furthering the other stated objectives of the Plan. Increased appreciation among the people in the region and state of the Village's history and architecture, for example, could translate into economic benefits. This could include heritage tourism promotion and links with other civic organizations, local and regional entities.

5. Adaptively reuse Coventry Village's historic mills as centers for new growth and more effective use of under-utilized resources consistent with goals 1 & 3 above.

6. Initiate public actions to improve the appearance of the village, calm traffic, and provide sidewalks and parking. Attract visitors, encourage them to linger, give them a reason to return and encourage them to pass the word. (As recommended by the Route 31 Curve committee, 1995)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. PRESERVE THE VILLAGE'S HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES:

- Create a revitalization loan and grant program or partner with organizations that can assist with this. Focus on another round of facade improvements to select storefronts.
- Promote the use of Historic Preservation Tax Credits for rehabilitation projects.
- Encourage stronger advocacy for historic preservation by existing groups or creation of a new organization to improve public perception. The Village Improvement Society was formed in 1993 can assist with this function, as well as the Economic Development Commission.
- Monitor Village Zoning Regulations and Design Guidelines to ensure their proper function and applicability.

2. INCREASE ECONOMIC AND FUNCTIONAL VITALITY:

- Selectively promote more intensive and appropriate uses in the Village, both commercial and residential
- Plan a careful strategy to combine new uses, including services, specialty retail, starter businesses, clustered housing on the Village edges, and commercial development along Main Street
- Target new uses that will have a regional market, including those that will be attractive to the University of Connecticut, i.e. unique destination services
- Develop the Village's tourist potential in tandem with the Hale Homestead, Coventry's significant tourist draw. Draw on Civil War heritage (munitions)
- Participate actively in the planning efforts of the Last Green Valley, Inc.
- Develop ways to connect the visitors who attend the Coventry Regional Farmers Market (CRFM) to visit the village and experience its businesses.
- Create additional public spaces for events.
- Enhance Millbrook Park and consider it as an entertainment venue and/or garden destination.

RECOMMENDATIONS (CONTINUED)

3. ADAPTIVELY REUSE COVENTRY VILLAGE'S HISTORIC MILLS AND UNDER-UTILIZED PROPERTIES:

- Encourage revitalization of the mills as new centers for commercial growth, each mill perhaps to serve as a different thematic center.
- Address environmental contamination issues. Encourage Broomfield redevelopment.
- Encourage the streamlined coordination of development applications for mill reuse.

4. ENHANCE SIGNIFICANT NATURAL RESOURCES:

- Continue development of a linear park along Mill Brook between Lake Wangumbaug and the Willimantic River, with public access and open space linkages to Main Street. Restore the old mill ponds and dams where feasible, and create a protective zone around the park with heightened planning review powers.
- Create a Village revitalization council to plan strategy and implementation.
- Study and implement a plan for expanded recreational opportunities at Patriots Park and at the other end of the linear park at the Willimantic River. (canoeing, fishing)
- Enact an archaeological protection ordinance.
- Encourage open space preservation through incentive zoning, conservation easements, and purchase.

5. INITIATE PUBLIC ACTIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS:

- Advocate and guide the appropriate adaptive re-use of the former Town garage site while maintaining Millbrook connectivity.
- Continue to support and implement the Route 31 curve project and address the issues listed below:
- Improve traffic control and provide traffic calming measures
- Design and implement a program of coordinated parking facilities and new sidewalks, access management, lighting, street furniture, signage, and landscaping in the Village center.
- Advocate context sensitive design with Route 31 curve re-alignment including pedestrian access and parking

6. ESTABLISH FINANCIAL INCENTIVES AND A REVITALIZATION STRATEGY:

- Create a revitalization loan and grant program, with public and private funding and participation.
- Partner with organizations that can provide financial assistance
- Apply investment incentive program when applicable (assessment phase in).
- Hire a full time Town or Regional Economic Development Coordinator.

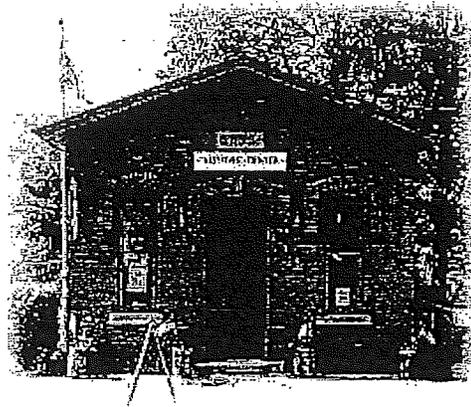
COVENTRY VILLAGE TODAY

Coventry Visitors' Center

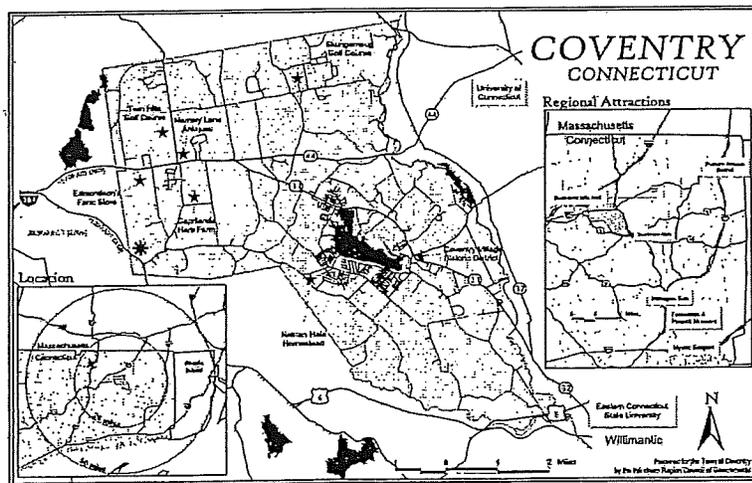
INTRODUCTION

The many different aspects that contribute to the character of the Village today must be understood and evaluated to plan intelligently for the future. This section of the report examines the Village in the framework of the following topics:

- The natural environment
- The built environment
- Public infrastructure
- Economic conditions
- Citizen participation in Village life



The Town of Coventry covers about 37 square miles, most of which is farmland or undeveloped, and it has a population estimated to be about 12,500. It lies 18 miles east of Hartford, just beyond the end of Interstate 384, in a location that is attractive for growth as a commuter suburb of the capital city. The University of Connecticut and Eastern Connecticut State University, a few miles to the east, are another major presence affecting the town's future; it can be expected to generate new housing and economic development in Coventry, particularly along Route 44 and in the vicinity of Coventry Village.



THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1. ASSETS

The key natural feature of the Village, and perhaps the most important factor in its historical development, is Mill Brook. While no longer playing the traditional role of power source, the brook's winding, rock-laden course, picturesque falls and ponds, and plentiful stone retaining walls and ruins associated with the 19th-century industries, are a strong visual element. The significance of Mill Brook may be the Village's best-kept secret, since passersby on Main Street are afforded only occasional and fleeting glimpses of the brook, the surrounding wetlands, and the extant mill buildings. From Mason Street, Bradbury Lane, and the other roads traversing the stream, its impact and high visual qualities are clear.

With the exception of the mills themselves and the remnants of their power systems, the wetlands along Mill Brook have acted to limit development in most places close to the stream. Some of the old retention ponds survive, although many that were drained have filled in with natural growth. This continuous, albeit fragile, system of undeveloped open space is a significant asset to the Village, aesthetically, recreationally, and environmentally through natural drainage and replenishment of ground water. State statutes call wetlands such as these indispensable and irreplaceable but fragile natural resources "essential to an adequate supply of surface and underground water, to hydrological stability and control of flooding and erosion, to the recharging and purification of the ground water, and to the existence of many forms of animal, aquatic, and plant life."

The topography is an important part of the environment. The sharp descent and curve in Main Street near the Teleflex facilities create a dramatic entrance to the Village. On the side streets to the north and south, the hilly terrain encloses the Village, giving it an unusual sense of cohesion and offering scenic vistas from many points. Coventry Village is fortunate in the amount of fields and woodland that survive in and around the Village center. This open space, coursed with old stone walls and, according to Dr. Nicholas Bellantoni, the State Archaeologist, the possible repository of notable archaeological resources, is a crucial part of the historic visual character of Coventry Village. Much of the open land remains in private hands in the form of large holdings. The development of these properties would mark a major, and certainly to some extent adverse, change in the ambience of the area.

Large parcels of property are also in public hands, including Patriots Park, the adjacent state boat launching site, the 7.5 acre Mill Brook Park, the 7-acre Nathan Hale Cemetery, the 3-1/2 acre Town Garage site, and the Historic Green. Utility rights-of-way cross the village area in several places, assuring the long-term preservation of large, otherwise undeveloped, tracts that have recreational potential for passive purposes.

The historic significance of the village was recognized in 1994 when the Village was designated as a Natural Register Historic District by the Department of Interior. The Village has 72 inventoried historic assets as well as many other structures of interest.

2. ISSUES

Coventry Village's natural assets must continue to be preserved and protected from adverse encroachment since they play an extremely vital role in the appearance, function, and overall atmosphere of the Village. One of the most key features in the Village is the Mill Brook and its associated wetlands. The Inland Wetlands Agency is responsible for regulating the activities which occur within or adjacent to the wetlands. Since the statutory definition of wetlands has been broadened, environmental standards have become more stringent and the Town has an Inland Wetlands Agent staff person that provides more opportunity to adequately manage the development activities that occur in these sensitive areas. Coventry Lake, where the Mill Brook emanates, is also a critical resource and demands even more careful planning and protection. The Town contracts with an environmental firm specializing in lake water quality to annually analyze lake quality and pinpoint any negative influences. The analysis continually indicates that the lake is in very good health, despite the level of recreational boating and the extreme residential density along its shores.

The flood plain associated with Coventry Lake and the Mill Brook presents a very unique and difficult challenge due to severe regulatory limitations. The Federal Emergency Management Agency mandates the flood plain regulations which the town must adhere to in order to participate in the flood insurance program. These regulations pose severe limitations to redevelopment of properties in flood plain areas. Projects must be sensitively and creatively designed to work within the context of these regulations.

It is significant to note that much of the Village Area is designated in a Flood Zone A by FEMA which does not possess specific flood elevations. The flood plan limits need to be defined.

Another important feature in the landscape is the prevalence of stone walls and other stone landscape elements within the Village. These resources are not only a cultural heritage, but are vital to the natural environment as well. It is critical to encourage

the preservation of these amenities and to advocate for their protection. As of late, stonewalls have become a demanded commodity that can be dismantled and sold at a profit. It is recommended that an inventory of the existing stone landscape elements be compiled in order to be aware of their location and condition.

The Village benefits from the presence of a number of relatively large undeveloped parcels that exist along the fringes of the district and create a charming vegetative periphery. The presence of street trees is a key element to the overall ambience and serves as traffic calming measures. The town is actively compiling data on the existence of significant trees and potentially hazardous trees near the rights-of-way.

The preservation of open space in the Village is a significant goal which has been partly supported by the town with the cooperation of other agencies. A large and central parcel of land (Coutu property) was purchased on Wall Street and will be preserved. Plans are being formulated to create passive recreation opportunities along the Mill Brook for the community. Many years ago, the town purchased the former Salvation Army camp which is now Patriots Park. Open space preservation will remain a challenge in the future.

Due to the existence of old mill structures in the Village, there is recognition that certain sites contain or may contain hazardous materials from the manufacturing activities that once occurred there. The Kenyon Mill once possessed chemical contamination from the former tenant. Significant efforts have been made to retain the historic structures, encourage adaptive re-use, and eliminate the contamination with the Kenyon Falls Housing Development Adaptive Reuse Project. Other sites have not been investigated but may prove to contain some contamination. Fortunately, today there are more opportunities for financial assistance from governmental agencies to assist in the remediation of brownfield sites and the town should take advantage of these programs.

ISSUES (continued)

Efforts continue on the preservation and adaptive re-use of the Tracey-Shoddy mill building remains. The town used State Grant Funding to stabilize the structure and further improvements to allow for an adaptive re-use are recommended. Consideration should be given to create a public space for community events (such as Christmas in the Village) and public restrooms.

The improvement and adaptive re-use of the former firehouse building has been quite successful. A local electrician owns the building and it currently contains an office and storage for the electrician as well as the community meeting space and coffee shop.

3. SOLUTIONS

The key issues affecting the quality of Coventry Village's natural environment, therefore, may be summarized as follows:

- Adaptive reuse existing buildings to promote economic development and jobs creation.
- Purchase public access easements and trail development on properties along the Mill Brook to encourage pedestrian usage.
- Protecting and enhancing the Mill Brook, Coventry Lake, and surrounding watershed for public benefit, which might include public access and limited recreational use
- Conserving adequate open space to maintain the Village's well preserved historic character
- Continue improving use of town-owned properties for recreational and community gathering purposes and other necessary adaptive re-use to meet community needs.
- Identifying and preserving scenic vistas and the Village topography
- Defining opportunities for using utility rights-of-way for public enjoyment
- Continue the linear trail system along the Mill Brook
- Confronting the problems of hazardous wastes by participating in remediation activities for contaminated sites
- Encourage the recognition, significance of stone and preservation landscape elements by holding public forums to educate and advocate preservation as well as creating an inventory
- Continuation of physical improvements to Patriots Park
- Continue active involvement and execution of the State DOT Route 31 curve project to allow for context sensitive design.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

1. ASSETS

Coventry Village's major built environment asset is the continued existence of most of its historic architectural heritage, which is still in relatively good condition and in the original context of a compact, intimate village setting. The importance of the area has long been recognized. The Village District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1994, and the Village was recommended for local designation as a historic district in 1974. That proposal was defeated in public referendum, in part because of public misconceptions about the economic advantages of such a designation. The strongest sense of Coventry Village's historic character comes from the integrity of Main Street. For much of its history, this thoroughfare has been the commercial, economic, and social hub of the surrounding rural area. Buildings are clustered closely together at the sidewalk line for easy access by pedestrians. Today, Main Street is still a diverse mix of uses and styles ranging in age from the mid-1700s to the early-20th century, with relatively few modern commercial structures.

Prospect and Wall streets, paralleling and overlooking Main Street, are remarkable in the integrity of their 19th-century residences. Hardly a 20th century exception breaks the continuity from one end to the other. The undeveloped slope down to Mill Brook offers a direct visual connection to the stream and Main Street, enhanced by stone walls, remnants of mill ponds and natural vegetation. Expanses of woodland in and around the Village contribute to the 19th-century atmosphere.

Traveling south from the Village center, the density thins quickly and the feeling of rural environment resumes, the occasional houses being set back farther from the road and interspersed with large tracts of open space. This landscape contrasts dramatically with the greater density of the Village, enhancing its definition. On Depot Road, the historic continuation of Main Street, the

density increases moderately. While the majority of historic buildings in the village area are residential, perhaps the most interesting and historically important elements of the built environment are the 19th-century mill buildings, seven of which remain from those that once stood at 17 mill sites along the brook:

1. Boynton Mill now converted for residential use.
2. The Teleflex complex, which is an active manufacturing operation.
3. The former Village fire house and the Tracy Shoddy Mill.
4. The Clock and Whale Factory, originally the Morgan Silk Mill, is now in marginal condition, and houses small businesses.
5. The Kingsbury Box Factory, now used for storage.
6. The small stone structure adjacent to the Town Garage, notable for its stonework arch over Mill Brook, was once part of the Mill Brook Woolen Company.
7. The former Kenyon Mill building is now the location of 'Kenyon Falls', a high-density residential project that preserved the old mill structure and roman pond and dam.
8. The Tracy-Shoddy Mill stone structure remains are now being reconstructed to allow for adaptive re-use due to the efforts of the VIS and the town to preserve the site.

The view from the automobile in the Village should be noted since most people today relate to the Village first from their cars. The entry into the built-up area from either direction is dramatic: from the northwest, one descends on Route 31 to Lake Street and then suddenly turns left to see the Village nestled in the valley; from the southeast, one approaches uphill on axis with the Congregational Church spire and then reaches a plateau, just west of School Street, containing closely spaced historic buildings. The sense of village intimacy is

heightened because most parking has been removed from the street to terraced lots behind the buildings, an advantage of the sloping topography. The Bidwell Tavern off-street parking facilities are particularly attractive and convenient. Overall, the village has not achieved the pedestrian-human scale that is necessary.

In visual terms, the image of the Village is cohesive and definable in its entry and exit points. Its character is generally consistent and the various components of the service and commercial activities are in clear contrast to the residential or rural character of the approaches from any direction. Fortunately, the Village has escaped the extended linear patterns of modern commercial strip development.

2. ISSUES

A major problem facing the Village is the potential lack of protection of its significant historic resources, leaving them subject to the whims of the marketplace. This has allowed the development of non-compatible uses and the inappropriate and sometimes destructive alteration of historic structures. The integrity of Main Street has been diminished by the demolition or removal of a number of buildings, leaving unfortunate gaps. The mill buildings and sites vary greatly in condition, and are not now used for optimal service to the residents or in a way that maximizes their historic significance or economic potential. They represent a range of opportunities for development, but there is currently no strategy for marketing them. Several visual aspects detract from the historic character of the Village. Chief among these is the dominating presence of above-ground utility lines in the foreground of any historic vista. As the State considers methods of "hardening" the electric grid, discussions should take place to consider burying the utilities.

A number of modern buildings and uses are out of character with the historic image of the Village. The need for parking has resulted in building demolitions and in the separation

of storefronts from the street by parking bays, both of which create visual gaps in the continuity of the streetscape. Traffic speeds and the focus on auto-oriented business have negatively impacted the pedestrian. Sidewalks and trees have been lost and not replaced, and a proliferation of curb cuts serving lots and driveways hinders pedestrian traffic.

3. SOLUTIONS

The main solutions to be considered in relation to the quality of the built environment are:

- Identifying cost effective means to preserve and protect the surviving historic resources.
- Encouraging adaptive reuse of under-utilized or vacant historic buildings.
- Ensuring that the location, density, and design of new construction is sensitive to the old by applying the Village Design Guidelines.
- Enhancing historic characteristics of the built environment.
- Identifying uses that meet the needs of current residents and the town as a whole.
- Allow for context sensitive design review with new development.
- Encourage human scale/pedestrian friendly improvement with less focus on the automobile.
- Execute State DOT Route 31 Curve Project. (Scheduled for 2014)
- Apply for and administer grant funds for physical improvements to the Village by encouraging private/public investment partnerships.
- Monitor success of the Village Zoning Regulations and Design Guidelines.
- Complete the required improvements to the Tracy Shoddy Mill to encourage its Adaptive Re-Use.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

1. ASSETS

Coventry Village is the one part of town with a public water and sewer system, which can encourage increased development in the Village center. Publicly-owned open space and recreation areas, as itemized in the discussion of the natural environment, are a major asset to the Village worthy of further enhancement. Patriots Park is the prime recreational resource and a focus of special activities during the summer. Its potential as a town facility continues to blossom. The extensive undeveloped land in private ownership in the Village holds the potential for acquisition and development of a coordinated system of open space for active and passive use. Public improvements are a major determinant of Village character. In the past, the Village was served by sidewalks and Main Street was lined by mature trees, but these have not been maintained. The efforts of local residents, the Town, and the Visitors' Center coordinator to beautify the 1876 Visitors' Center with planters and attractive paving are commendable.

Many of the roads in the village are bordered by stone walls, open space, and woodlands and would qualify for protection under the Scenic Road Ordinance. The sharp curve on Main Street near the Teleflex factory has been considered an impediment to smooth traffic flow, but the road configuration helps reduce the speed of traffic, and is an important visual element. The recently improved sign welcoming visitors to Coventry, past the southeastern end of the village near Depot Road, helps establish a positive community image and identity. The Gateway garden the intersection at Main and Lake Streets possesses a welcome sign that needs improvement. Consider including a public events sign to reduce the clutter of many event signs.

2. ISSUES

There is currently no coordinated plan for public infrastructure in the Village. Such a plan might have provided for the burying of utility lines while the streets were excavated for sewer installation, for example, and could have included construction of sidewalks in the same process. A coordinated plan would be beneficial for the village. This plan could include proposed street furniture and lighting as well. While the sewers have increased the capacity of the Village to absorb development, the absence of a unified or coordinated system of water supply has been a hindrance. The existing CT Water System is not capable of providing water for fire protection including economic growth and mixed uses. The resulting layout precludes the possibility of clustered housing that would have preserved a sense of open space along Mill Brook.

Other areas that could be improved by public investment and commitment include parking facilities and traffic and speed control. While located mainly on visually unobtrusive lots behind Main Street structures, the parking is fragmented with many entrances and curb cuts. As a result, pedestrian use of Main Street is hazardous and requires shoppers to re-enter traffic for multiple-use trips. The existing speed limits, which are difficult to enforce, and the lack of traffic direction contribute to an environment that is a threat to the pedestrian. In general, it is clear that use of the Village by pedestrians and the handicapped has not been effectively encouraged. Grade differences between parking areas and store entrances, traffic hazards, and lack of continuous connections and visual amenities are all obstacles to use.

PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE (continued)

3. Solutions

- Execute the State DOT Route 31 Curve Context Sensitive Project for the Village, which includes accessible sidewalks, street furniture, lighting, landscaping, traffic calming, coordinated parking, and curb cuts.
- Define the town's role in the regulation of parking, signage, and traffic patterns.
- Expand recreational opportunities along the Mill Brook.
- Identify ways to better serve pedestrians and the handicapped.
- Apply for and administer grant funds to facilitate improvements by establishing public/private partnerships.
- Enhance the visibility and use of the Visitors Center.
- Pursue the Adaptive Re-Use of the former Town garage site and Tracy Shoddy Mill
- Continue to enhance the Mill Brook parking by adding bike lockers, gazebo to advocate its enjoyment. Address invasive species along the Mill Brook.
- Purchase and install a digital community message board sign that can be located near the reconstructed Route 31 curve.
- Purchase and install speed posting radar signs to help reduce speeding of vehicles in the Village.
- Construct sidewalks between Main Street and Monument Hill Road on Lake Street to eliminate a pedestrian gap and encourage safety.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

1. ASSETS

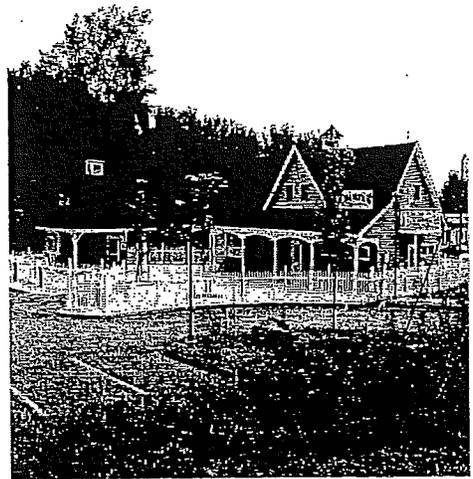
One of Coventry Village's traditional roles has been as a mixed-use service center for area residents. It offers such local services as a post office, library, vehicle repair, bank, and laundromat. It also has some specialty businesses serving wider markets, such as restaurants and antiques shops. Teleflex is presently the only industrial facility of a large scale. This small-scale mixed-use role appears stable, partly as a result of a slow market climate, but major changes could occur because of the sewer system and the availability of significant tracts of undeveloped land. The Town of Coventry as a whole should experience considerable growth over time. Development along Routes 6 and 44 is accelerating, and pressures from the Hartford area continue to increase. The town also has a significant role to play in the region due to its popular tourist attractions, the Nathan Hale Homestead, Coventry Regional Farmers Market, the proximity to the University of Connecticut, and its inclusion in the National Park Service's Heritage Corridor project. These regional assets offer the potential to expand and enhance the economic role that Coventry Village now plays.

The Village's historic heritage could be a distinct economic advantage in attracting commercial growth; similarly high quality architecture is the centerpiece for the successful business centers of other Connecticut towns such as Avon and Stonington. The environment is attractive and the town has a vested interest in protecting the amenities that enhance its coherent image. This asset also makes it attractive for residential development.

The ultimate reuse of Daisy's Creamery, ultimate completion of the Bidwell Village Project as well as the Kenyon Falls Project offer unique assets.

2. ISSUES

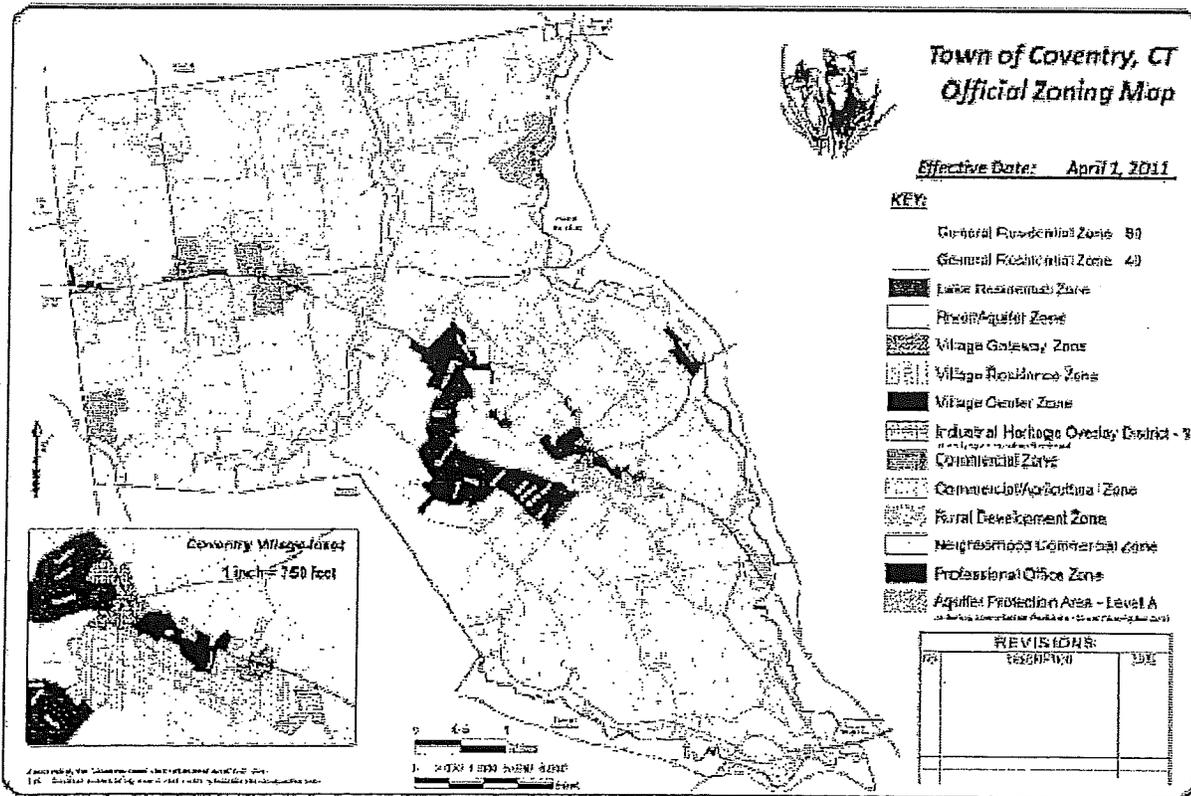
The sluggish market conditions at present give breathing space for careful planning of future growth, but they also make new development and services harder to attract. Because the town is small, new businesses need strong appeal to succeed or an increasing population to support them. This makes it imperative to have good planning and development controls to protect the historic character of the environment as the economic base expands. A number of factors hinder the Village's potential for growth. Limited mechanisms or strategies are now in place to direct the location and type of new economic development, and there are few incentives to attract and encourage developers. There has also been little coordination within the business community to stimulate and direct growth. Fire suppression through hydrants would promote enhanced mixed use. A lack of visual amenities such as sidewalks, attractive lighting and landscaping, and the increasing speed and volume of traffic on Main Street, have combined to restrict the Village's visual "curb appeal" and are an obstacle to attracting customers. The prolonged process of the Route 31 curve realignment project has delayed the implementation of solutions.



ECONOMIC CONDITIONS (continued)

3. SOLUTIONS

- Seek ways to attract and retain businesses that serve the current residents and/or tourists.
- Evaluate the benefits to the Village from existing and potential tourist traffic involving the Coventry Regional Farmer's Market.
- Define the desired mix, density, and location of new uses.
- Identify targeted markets and appropriate marketing strategies.
- Protect the Village from incompatible uses and growth patterns.
- Identify housing needs, possible locations and targeted markets.
- Encourage organization within the business community.
- Provide links to organizations which provide financial assistance.
- Apply for and administer grant funding to encourage improvements to Village businesses that encourage a public/private partnership.
- Hire a full time local or regional economic develop staff or consultant.
- Continue to assist new zoning in their pursuit of a large addition to their operation; partner with State DECD.



CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

1. ASSETS

While the history and architecture of Coventry Village are resources of great value to be preserved and respected, the citizens of the town are its most important asset. Their talents, energy, and commitment will determine the future of the Village: its character and vitality, and even its survival as a unified, efficient, and attractive place. Coventry is fortunate to have a proportionately large number of its residents actively involved in local politics and community organizations.

One source indicates that 600 individuals are participating in committees and public groups out of a population of 12,500, a notably high percentage. The Economic Development Commission is dealing with the important issue of balancing growth and tax base expansion with preservation of both Coventry's characteristic farmland and its historic and cultural resources. The "consortium" of town bodies that includes the Planning and Zoning Commission, Economic Development Commission, Town Council, and Conservation Commission, and other committees is a significant vehicle for a coordinated approach to planning for Coventry's future. The Village clearly benefits from the dedicated efforts of the VIS and the Coventry Historical Society.

While many residents are now involved in civic and governmental activities, the general population is understandably not current on planning issues and procedures. More communication is needed among groups and business people, and with town government, local farmers, and administrators of tourist attractions. The opportunities for their coordinated participation have not been

defined.

The Town Newsletter is a well-established vehicle for community news and recognition, having been in continuous publication since 1981. Monthly e-blasts are distributed to 700 enrollees. Keeping citizens informed of activities, issues, and achievements is vital to effective citizen participation in town affairs. The use of the town's website and Channel 13 are excellent vehicles to inform the community of ongoing activities. The proximity of UConn presents the possibility of professionally trained students, faculty, and volunteers to participate in studies and evaluation of resources. Many already live in Coventry and would be directly affected by the quality of planning decisions.

2. SOLUTIONS

- Identify roles for citizens in the planning process and advocacy.
- Coordinate interested civic groups and business organizations.
- Recognize contributions by existing groups and individuals.
- Improve communications and public relations relative to Village advocacy.
- Feature the Village on several tapings of "Coventry Conversations" on local cable access.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

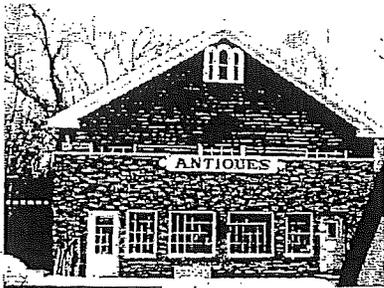
The July 1990 Preservation Plan for Coventry Village (and this 2012 update) showed selective research into the expressed community needs and market-driven potentials in order to make general observations about the kinds of uses that might be appropriate to Coventry Village. In particular, the underlying demographics have been examined, drive-by field surveys conducted, and interviews conducted with several realtors and developers. General conclusions that can be drawn from the research are as follows:

- There is limited opportunity for development of new convenience commercial space because of the small population of Coventry and the different orientations of the north and south parts of town.
- The ability to attract any significant new uses to the center will require improving "curb appeal" of the Village and a coordinated preservation, development, and marketing program.
- There will continue to be significant potential for sales housing in a variety of ownership and physical types.
- The potential for conventional rental housing is limited, with the exception of university-related student housing, particularly as upward pressures mount on for room and board rates.
- There is a need for entry-level housing which can be developed through a variety of mechanisms such as tax credits (historic and low-income) and state loans and grants.
- There is a potential for UConn-related starter business development activity in one or more mill structures.
- There may be an opportunity to attract one or two large business activities to the mill structures.
- Continue to communicate with local and regional developers, realtors and property owners To better understand the ability to retain and attract appropriate economic development.
- Implement methods to connect the thousands of Coventry Regional Farmer's Market visitors with the village businesses.

Bibliography

1. 'Preservation Plan for Coventry Village' July 1990 prepared for the Town of Coventry by Preservation Planning Associates, West Hartford, Ct.

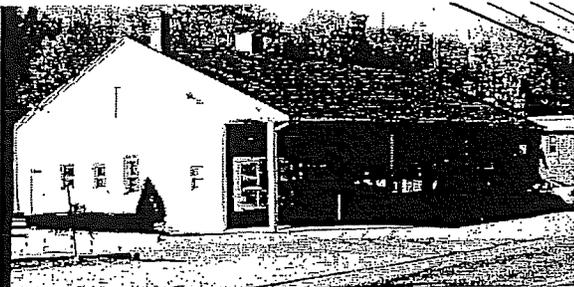
APPENDIX- Specific Recommendations for Village Sites



1340 Main- Facade Improvements, Good Parking- Add pedestrian access



1262-64 Main- Facade improvements, parking OK, possible cross walk

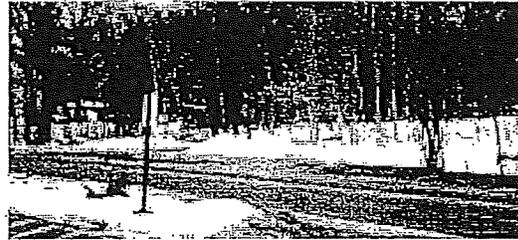


1203 Main- Pedestrian access and improvements adjacent to Mill Brook Park in rear, outdoor cafe, landscaping

1141-1153 Main Street Lot- Provide municipal parking with access to Clock & Whale factory (rear) and potential access to rear of 1159 Main



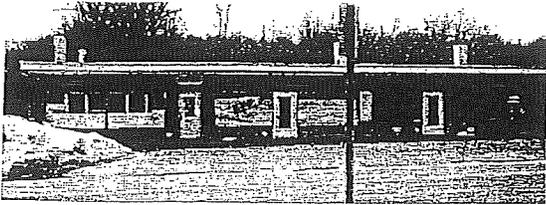
1153 Main- possible expansion and parking improvements



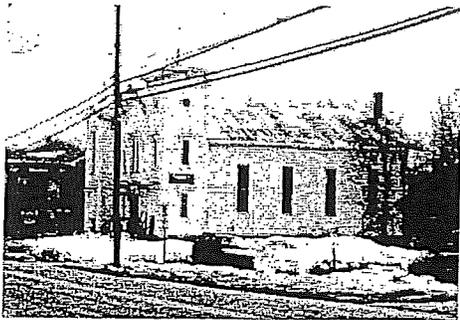
Lot across from 1153 Main- Acquire frontage for retail, possible municipal parking, and sidewalks to Library



1140 Main- Facade improvements, add parking, sidewalk to Library



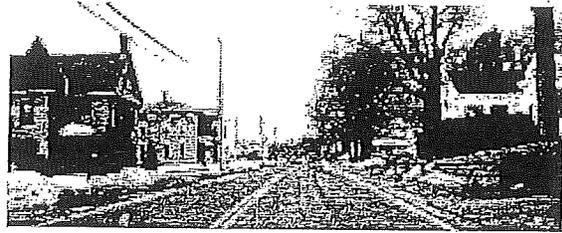
1159 Main- Redevelop, expand by adding a story or to the rear, add sidewalks, add access to rear parking, on-street parallel parking



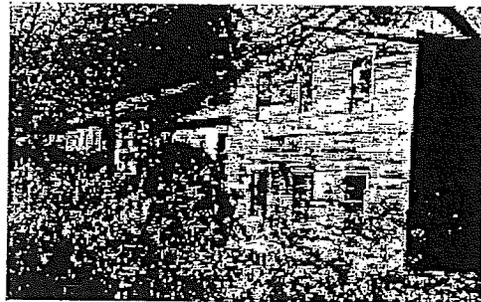
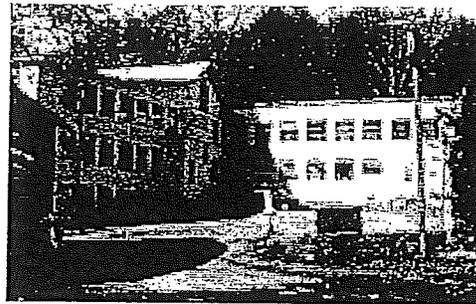
1141 Main Redevelop to retail (mix), office and/or residential, parking available in rear and handicap access at front.



1181 Main Street, Citgo Gas & Convenient Store



Intersection with Mason St. apply traffic calming measures



Mason St- Clock & Whale Factory and Kingsbury Box factory, potential for large scale redevelopment, adjacent to Mill Brook, good parking, connect to Main Street site.