

LEXINGTON - PAST AND PRESENT

A UNIQUE AND SPECIAL COMMUNITY

An underlying theme of this Comprehensive Plan is the unique and special character of the City of Lexington.

The City has a rich history and an abundance of significant architecture represented in its buildings. This architectural heritage has been chronicled in *The Architecture of Historic Lexington*, written by Royster Lyle and Pam Simpson.

The historic core of the City is a Nationally Registered Historic District, as are the Washington and Lee Colonnade and the Virginia Military Institute Post. The City has taken major steps to restore and protect these resources. All overhead utility lines have been placed underground along Main Street and brick sidewalks reinstalled. The Architectural Review Board reviews all proposed changes to the exterior of buildings in the downtown. The result is a charming town with a strong character which is extremely attractive to residents and visitors.

Two of Virginia's highly respected education institutions, Washington and Lee University (W&L) and Virginia Military Institute (VMI), are located in Lexington. Washington and Lee University is a national ranked liberal arts and science institution with two undergraduate divisions and a School of Law. Virginia Military Institute is one of 15 state-supported institutions of higher education. The Virginia Military Institute Research Laboratories, a nonprofit organization, performs scientific and engineering investigations and research for industry and government.

An abundance of cultural activities contribute to the area's charm. The Lime Kiln Theater presents a professional theatrical and concert series through the summer months in an outdoor amphitheater. FAIR, Fine Arts in Rockbridge, is an umbrella organization which includes groups interested in promoting arts in education, orchestra, dance, and drama. Several additional community organizations, such as the Rockbridge Arts Guild, Rockbridge Community Chorus, Rockbridge Historical Society and Historic Lexington Foundation, sponsor other cultural activities.

The Lenfest Center for the Performing Arts at Washington and Lee University opened in 1991 and is a state of the art facility devoted to the fine arts. The Washington and Lee Theater Arts Department is nationally recognized for its quality. Virginia Military Institute also offers theatrical productions throughout the school year. Both W&L and VMI provide lectures, concerts and art exhibits, most of which are available to the general public and many of which are free.

A number of special interest clubs and organizations are active in Lexington and the surrounding areas of Rockbridge County and nearby Buena Vista, Natural Bridge and Glasgow. Opportunities for participation abound, whether interests are in civic activities; history; gardening and other hobbies; conservation; recreation; service to children, the elderly or the homeless; political action; healthcare; or the well being of animals.

Both W&L and VMI sponsor a full array of sports teams. VMI is now a member of the Big South Conference and W&L the Old Dominion Athletic Conference. As a result, there are numerous collegiate athletic events in the area, many free.

Located at the southern end of the Great Valley of Virginia, Lexington and surrounding Rockbridge County possess great natural beauty. The abundance of recreational opportunities available to Lexington and area residents contribute greatly to the enjoyable quality of life.

Opportunities for outdoor recreation abound. Residents have access to natural areas in the County such as the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests, the Goshen Wildlife Management Area, Little North Mountain Wildlife Management Area, Goshen Natural Area, Brushy Hill Park and the Blue Ridge Parkway. The George Washington National Forest contains 45,250 acres in Rockbridge County and the Jefferson National Forest includes 21,192 acres in the County. Together, these two National Forests compose over 17% of the total land area of the County.

The Maury River provides excellent opportunities for swimming, canoeing and fishing. Lake Robertson, owned by the Virginia Game Commission, is operated by Rockbridge County as a recreation facility. The secondary roads in the County, the Blue Ridge Parkway and the trails in the National Forests provide excellent biking.

There are more than 100 culturally and historically significant sites in the Rockbridge County area. The best known are the Cyrus McCormick Farm, Natural Bridge of Virginia, Lee Chapel on the campus of Washington and Lee University, the home of Stonewall Jackson, the Virginia Military Institute Post, and the George C. Marshall Museum.

The Virginia Horse Center is located three miles from Lexington. The Horse Center is a 600-acre facility with permanent stabling for 750 horses, an indoor arena with seating for over 4,500, ten other show arenas, two cross country courses and two campgrounds. The Center hosts major horse shows and sales, grand-prix jumping classes, dressage exhibitions, breed shows, and 4-H judging competitions. The Horse Center also serves as the site for the Rockbridge Regional Fair.

Lexington has carefully attended to its heritage while still moving forward into the 21st Century. Citizens can take pride in their successful efforts to create opportunities which make Lexington culturally significant. Living in Lexington is, in fact, living in a unique and special community. Those who live in this unique and special community are aware, as they enjoy daily activities, that the present is deeply influenced by Lexington's past.

HISTORY

Indian legend has it that the beauty of the Shenandoah Valley so awed the heavens that each star cast the brightest jewel from its crown into the valley's limpid waters, there to sparkle and shine ever after in a gesture of celestial benediction. Thus, arose the valley's name: Shenandoah - Clear-Eyed Daughter of the Stars.

Europeans discovered the Shenandoah Valley in 1716 when Virginia's Governor Spottswood and his band of explorers, the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe, gazed into it from the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Settlement of the valley began in the 1730's when Scots-Irish and German immigrants moved south from Pennsylvania through the valley and into what would become Rockbridge County. The earliest settlers followed a well-worn Indian path into the Shenandoah, and this route down the center of the valley - called the Great Wagon Road - continued to function as the primary thoroughfare for trade and travel. This same course is followed today by U.S. Route 11, the Valley Pike. Many of these settlers built homes and farms on land made available by Benjamin Borden, the recipient of a royal land grant that included much of the county.

The Virginia Legislature created Rockbridge County in 1778 and named Lexington as its seat. Lexington was named in honor of the Battle of Lexington-Concord, which had occurred only three years before. The town was located in the center of the county where the Great Wagon Road crossed the North River at Gilbert Campbell's Ford. There were strong springs in the area but the deciding factor on the site location was Isaac Campbell's donation of land.

The name Rockbridge was derived from the popular eighteenth century name for Natural Bridge - Rocky Bridge. Thomas Jefferson, a member of the state legislature, owned the tract that included Natural Bridge and is reported to have played a part in choosing the name.

The original town, which was 1300 feet long and 900 feet wide, was laid out in a grid pattern and included what is today the greater part of Lexington's Central Business District (CBD). Three streets running more or less north and south - Randolph, Main, and Jefferson Streets - were intersected by Henry, Washington, and Nelson Streets, forming four interior blocks. All but one of the streets were named for men prominent in the new nation's struggle for independence. A central block was designated for a courthouse and jail.

Many of the first buildings, including a courthouse, were constructed of logs. Before the community was 20 years old, a massive fire destroyed almost all of the town. The town was quickly rebuilt. The new buildings were mostly brick in the nineteenth century style which still dominates in the historic section of the city. In 1804, only eight years after the fire, a visitor to the area wrote: "Lexington is a handsome little village with good buildings," though he complained that he couldn't get any pie in the town.

The first bridge over the North River (now called the Maury River) serving Lexington was a toll bridge constructed by Colonel John Jordan, probably in 1834. The tolls collected were too high for some travelers, who continued to ford the river.

Martin's *Virginia Gazetteer* of 1835 reports that Lexington had Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, a printing office, five shoemakers, four taverns, four carpenters, three hatters, two tanneries, two tin-plate works, two cabinetmakers, two wheelwrights, two jewelers, two blacksmiths, and one bricklayer. Three libraries were open to the public. There were about 150 dwellings and nearly 900 inhabitants.

Lexington was incorporated in 1841.

Almost from the beginning, Lexington's main industry has been education. The various Valley of Virginia boys' academies, which were the predecessors of Washington and Lee University, go back to the early days of settlement.

In the early 1790's, Liberty Hall was built just to the west of the town to house the academy headed by the Reverend William Graham, a Presbyterian minister. The building burned in 1802. The massive stone walls of the structure can still be seen from West Nelson Street. In 1803, the college moved to its present location in Lexington.

When George Washington made a sizeable gift to the college's endowment, Liberty Hall's name was changed to honor the country's first president. At the end of the Civil War, the trustees of Washington College offered General Robert E. Lee the presidency of the institution. During the five years before his death in 1870, Lee modernized the college's curriculum, attracted much needed funding, and added several new buildings to the campus. After Lee's death, the trustees renamed the college Washington and Lee University (W&L).

Today, Washington and Lee University enjoys a reputation for academic excellence and has an enrollment of 1,700 undergraduates and 350 law students.

In 1816, three arsenals were established in Virginia by the General Assembly for the purpose of housing arms. One of these was built in Lexington. This brought a real change to this rather remote Valley town and the presence of state militiamen was, at times, a concern to the native Lexingtonians.

By the mid 1830's, a prominent Lexington lawyer and Washington College graduate, John T. L. Preston, advocated the establishment of a state military school at the arsenal. After much debate, locally and in the legislature, Virginia Military Institute (VMI) was founded and its first cadets were enrolled on November 11, 1839.

The first years under superintendent Francis H. Smith were difficult ones, but by 1849 VMI had proved itself a viable experiment and Smith called on New York architect Alexander Jackson Davis to create the new Barracks in the then popular Gothic Revival form. VMI

prospered during the pre-Civil War days. Among its faculty was Major Thomas J. Jackson, soon to become the South's famous hero, "Stonewall" Jackson.

The Corps of Cadets played a key role in the Battle of New Market in 1864. That battle remains a special part of the VMI tradition. In retaliation, Union forces later burned VMI and briefly occupied the town, but the area largely escaped the worst of the war's destruction.

From its start, VMI has prescribed to a rigid military lifestyle for its cadets while at the same time requiring high academic standards in engineering, the sciences, and liberal arts. Today, with its reputation of academic excellence and military training, VMI has an enrollment of 1,249.

In the 1850's, Main Street was lowered ten feet from its previous level at the Courthouse to its existing grade at the bottom of the hill at its junction with Jefferson Street. A close look at the Alexander-Withrow House and the Dold building, across the street, reveals the bricked up doorways on what are now their second stories. The exposed foundations on the present first floors of several other buildings are further indications of this change.

At the time of the Civil War and for many decades thereafter (well into the early twentieth century), Lexington's population was approximately 30% black. In 1860 the white population of Lexington was 1,438. Its black population of 696 was mostly slaves but included 91 free blacks.

By 1860, a series of dams, canals and locks made the Maury River, a tributary of the James River, navigable up to Lexington. The fortunes of both Lexington and the county changed dramatically with the sudden ease of transport all the way to Richmond.

Lexington was an important port from 1860 to the 1880's, when the railroad arrived. Canal boats 15 feet wide and 95 feet long were drawn up the river by mules. In addition to farm produce and flour from local mills, canal boats shipped considerable quantities of iron from the then thriving iron industry. The waterfront at East Lexington and Jordan's Point became a thriving, active commercial center. The first commercial operations sold for cash or traded household or farm products for produce which could be shipped on the canal.

General Hunter's Union troops burned the buildings at Jordan's Point when they raided Lexington in 1864. The people of Lexington burned the covered bridge which crossed the Maury River at Jordan's Point in an effort to prevent the Union troops from entering the city. The rebuilding of the bridge was not begun until 1870. It was not completed until about 1879.

The county's primarily agricultural economic base continued to diversify in the 1880's with the arrival of the railroad. The first train from Richmond chugged into East Lexington in 1881; however, the station was ultimately built near the future site of the Castle Hill Hotel rather than at Jordan's Point. This decision, and the ever-present threat of flooding on the

island, led to the eventual decline of the Point as an industrial and commercial center for the City.

The Lexington Land Company was formed late in a speculative real estate boom which hit the county in the early 1890's. The Company purchased 1,275 acres immediately west of the town, along the railroad and the river to the east. This land included Honeysuckle Hill, Castle Hill, Sunnyside, the old golf course (now "Fairwinds") and Mulberry Hill and extended north to the Maury River. It extended east, beyond the old covered bridge, and included land beyond the railroad line. The Company constructed the Hotel DeHart, a sprawling ornate structure of stone, brick and wood later known as Castle Hill which was reached by a bridge over Woods Creek. According to the prospectus of the Company:

There are already at Lexington one of the best equipped wood working mills in the state, a foundry with two cupolas, a machine shop with the latest iron working machinery complete, a chair factory doing a large and profitable business, a vegetable and a fruit canning factory whose products stand at the very head of the market, two large flouring mills, two corn mills and two plaster mills and one ice factory which supplies the neighboring town.

Lots were actively marketed in the spring and summer of 1891. There were few buyers. According to the *Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society, Volume 5*, "Within less than a year from its inception, Lexington's great boom was in a state of collapse, with nothing to show for it but a vast, empty hotel, a ready-made site for tennis courts, a wide expanse of unsold lots, and a financial tangle of the first order."

The Hotel DeHart was never opened as a hotel but remained boarded up for nearly two decades. In 1908 until the early 1920's, it was used as a student dormitory and as a summer hotel. It was about to be converted to a boys' boarding school when it was consumed in a spectacular early morning fire in September of 1922.

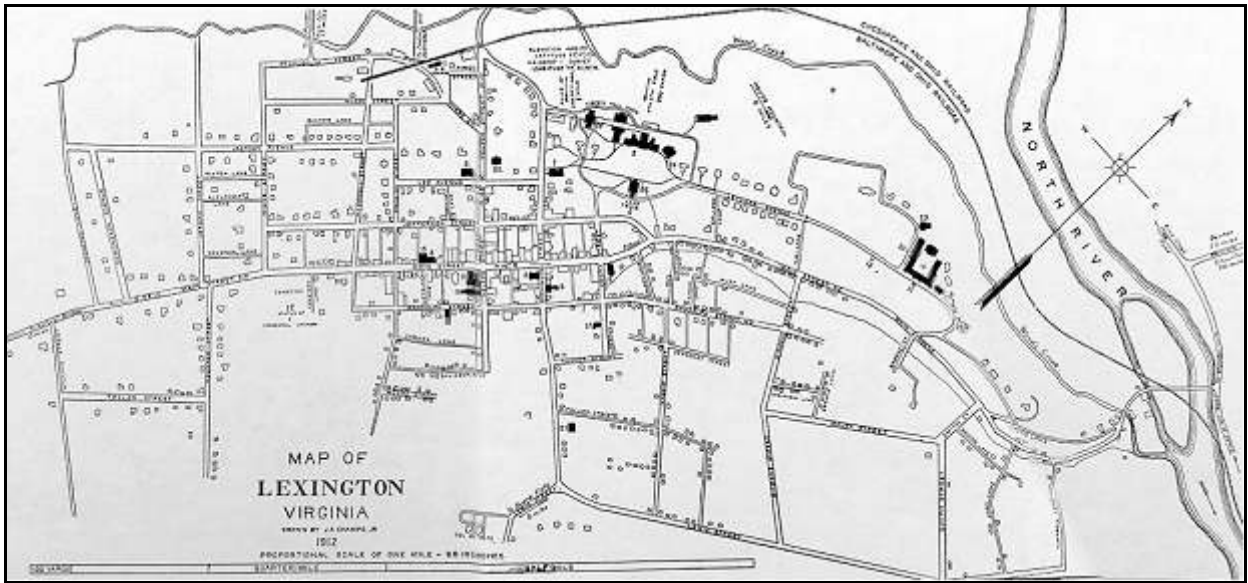


Figure 2.1 Town of Lexington, 1912

John Letcher described Lexington in the early 1900's in his book *Only Yesterday in Lexington, Virginia*. The town was more compressed and smaller than it is today, as shown in Figure 2.1 above. Woods Creek was the boundary on the west side of town. Edmondson Avenue was the farthest street to the south, though houses were strung out on either side of Main Street to the present site of the Lutheran Church. On the east side of town there were no buildings beyond Col Alto, which could only be reached by way of Washington Street. After it reached Col Alto, the street became a narrow country road leading to Buena Vista and Buffalo Forge

The north boundary of the town was the river where Main Street came to the south end of the covered wooden bridge. The north end of Lexington near the river was a much busier place than it is today. There was a general store, creamery and water powered flour mill. A railroad spur came across the highway into the mill grounds which were on the point of land between Woods Creek and the millrace after it left the turbine. The only paved streets in the town were in the business section where the stores and shops were concentrated along the same streets as they are today. There were six passenger trains and two freight trains arriving and departing daily. Lexington had a population of about 4,000 people.

The block of Main Street situated between the First Baptist Church and the Court House was home to black entrepreneurs for much of the twentieth century. One notable business was the grocery store operated by Harry Walker in the building we now call the Willson-Walker

House, located at 30 North Main Street. Walker's grocery store was quite successful. One of his major clients was Virginia Military Institute.

The black neighborhoods were called Green Hill (Tucker, Massie, Henry, Fuller and part of Randolph Street and Marble Lane); Diamond Hill (Diamond, Maury, Lewis, High, and North Randolph Streets); and, Centreville or Mudtown (Varner Lane and Taylor, East Preston, Moore, and Davidson Streets).

In 1935, a new bridge was built over the Maury River at East Lexington. It was meant to take the traffic from the old covered bridge, a historic landmark that survived until 1947. The present Route 11 going up the hill from the bridge was constructed after the bridge was completed. The Route 11 by-pass was constructed in 1955 and 1956, giving drivers the option of going around rather than through the town.

The B&O's rail line from Staunton to Lexington was abandoned in 1942. The rails were melted down to provide steel for the war effort. The final vestige of railroad service was washed away by hurricane Camille in 1969, which ruined the C&O's line along the Maury River and destroyed the wooden trestle at East Lexington. A recreational trail, the Chessie Trail, was constructed along the old railroad bed between Lexington and Buena Vista in 1981.

Lexington became a City on January 1, 1966. Early in that same decade, commercial shopping areas began to be constructed along East Nelson Street. At one point there were three supermarkets located in this area. The area now serves as a second major commercial center within the City.

During the 1960's a number of the businesses located downtown were owned and operated by black entrepreneurs. Woven into the fabric of a vibrant downtown retail center, were physicians, barbers, butchers, innkeepers and restaurateurs who comprised a black middle class. This community began to diminish as black entrepreneurs began to die and many of their children moved away in search of jobs. The decline was exacerbated when black public school teachers left Lexington in the wake of school desegregation for teaching jobs elsewhere.

Interstate I-81 was constructed through the heart of the Shenandoah Valley in the early 1960's. Two Lexington exits were provided. The arrival of the Interstate meant that I-81, rather than Route 11, was the major north-south artery connecting urban areas in the Valley. It also meant that the valley became a major conduit for through truck and automobile traffic. I-64 west to Charleston, West Virginia was completed in 1978. Its interconnection with I-81 is just north of Lexington. Thus, Lexington is located adjacent to the junction of major north-south and east-west highway networks.

Today, Lexington serves as the retail, cultural and a historical center of Rockbridge County, as well as the home of local government and the courts. In recent years the addition of major shopping centers to the north and east of the city has changed the character of retail business

in the Central Business District. But thanks to imaginative programs by Historic Lexington Foundation, Lexington Downtown Development Association (disbanded in 2006) and others, Lexington's downtown has not only survived but continues to serve as a focal point for the tourist trade and the area's economy.

According to *Virginia's Shenandoah Valley*:

For a town of 7,000, Lexington offers a surprising array of culture and history. Much of the historic downtown architecture is well preserved, and there is evident pride in the area's heritage. Much of Lexington's charm, to say nothing of its payroll, springs from its two famous schools: Washington and Lee University and Virginia Military Institute. Together, they are the city's only real industry, as well as the source of plays, films, lectures and the kind of intellectual vitality - and occasional snobbery - that only a college town seems to breed.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN LEXINGTON

Perhaps, the first historic preservation project in Lexington was the rebuilding of Virginia Military Institute (VMI) after the Civil War. When Union General David Hunter occupied Lexington in June 1864, the barracks and other institute buildings were burned. After the war, VMI's first order of business was repairing and rebuilding. None of the severely damaged pre-war structures were torn down; all were reconstructed. The faculty supported the rebuilding by contributing part of their salaries to help in the effort.

VMI undertook a second major preservation project in 1914, when it adopted the plan by Bertram G. Goodhue to redesign the Post and create what we today know as the Parade Ground. In order to do that, three of the original residences designed by A. J. Davis in the 1850's were measured, disassembled, the parts numbered and rebuilt. Those three residences were reassembled along the perimeter of the Parade Ground and occupied by the Superintendent, the Dean and the Commandant - in that order, left to right, as viewed from the Parade Ground. The quarters located closest to Barracks, formerly occupied by the Commandant, was demolished in 1966 to make room for Lejeune Hall.

Three local organizations have been particularly important in preserving Lexington's heritage: the Rockbridge Historical Society, the Ruth Anderson McCulloch Branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA), and Historic Lexington Foundation.

In 1939 the Rockbridge Historical Society was formed, in part, as an effort to save the old Nannie Jordan House on Main Street. Thought to be one of the oldest frame structures in the community, local leaders, including Ruth Anderson McCulloch, organized to try to save it,

but it was the Depression and there was little money to be had. The building was lost, but the historical society was born.

Local preservationists were also unable to save the Old Blue Hotel, which was demolished by Washington and Lee University (W&L) in 1947. That same year, the Society gained a home when the Castle on Randolph Street was donated to the group. The ca. 1790 building is one of the oldest in the community. It served as the Society's headquarters until 1974. Today, the Rockbridge Historical Society owns and maintains three properties: the Castle, the Sloan House and the Campbell House, which is maintained as a community museum.

The APVA is the oldest preservation organization in Rockbridge County. The first chapter was founded in 1896 with efforts to preserve Old Monmouth Church. The local chapter was reactivated in 1935 in an effort to save the old covered bridge in East Lexington. The most recent revival of the APVA in Lexington took place in 1964, when several important historic houses, including the Barclay House and the Alexander-Withrow House, were threatened with demolition. The houses were saved.

As a local chapter of a state-wide organization, the APVA was not allowed to own property. Thus, the Historic Lexington Foundation (HLF) was formed as an organization that could own property, receive legacies, and raise funds for preservation. The APVA did not disband, instead it focused on documenting local buildings, cemeteries and other resources, gathering material on their histories, and using its educational efforts to encourage preservation.

It was the threat that the old Barclay House might be torn down by a national fraternity that spurred the creation of the Historic Lexington Foundation in 1966. The Alexander-Withrow House was its first effort with a Revolving Fund. Using the area of lower Main Street between Washington and Henry Streets as the "Pilot Block," HLF bought and restored seven properties in the 1970's including the Central Hotel, the Jacob Ruff House and the Dold Building. The buildings were purchased, stabilized and the exteriors conserved, then they were sold with protective easements to sympathetic buyers who undertook the interior restorations.

In the mid-1970's, HLF undertook the project of restoring the Stonewall Jackson House to its 1850's appearance and then owned and operated it until 1995, when the Stonewall Jackson Foundation was formed.

HLF then returned to its primary mission of preservation. Recent projects have included the Miller's House at Jordan's Point and the Roberson-Phalen House on Jefferson Street. HLF's goals have always been to preserve historic properties and to enhance the beauty of Lexington, but these goals have also included encouraging others in similar efforts. The appearance of downtown Lexington gives ample evidence of HLF's success.

In 1971, the City established the Historic Downtown Preservation District. In 1973, the Architectural Review Board was created to provide design oversight.

In 1973, the older parts of the town's residential area, the central business district, Washington and Lee University and Virginia Military Institute were entered into the National Register of Historic Places. The conclusion of the report on which this designation was based stated: "The beautiful setting of the Valley, indeed the overall aesthetic impression of Lexington, is not essentially changed since the later-nineteenth century. Lexington has in abundance - if in fragile equilibrium - what other communities aspire to; she is what other Valley towns were thirty years ago.

In 1974, the city undertook a five-year capital project that included the redesign of traffic lights, burying utility wires and the installation of new brick sidewalks in the downtown.

More recent preservation efforts include:

- Preservation of the building once housing the Lyric Theater. Demolition had been requested by the previous owner and denied by the Architectural Review Board. The building was converted into nine condominium residences (1997);
- Restoration of Lexington Presbyterian Church by its membership after it was gutted by fire (2002);
- The building once housing the Sheridan Livery Stable was renovated and converted into a restaurant and inn (1997);
- Col Alto, constructed in 1827 for James McDowell who served as the Governor of Virginia, was restored and made a part of a hotel (1997). The grounds along Nelson Street remain much as they appeared at the turn of the century.
- The building once housing the old jail, adjacent to the Courthouse, was renovated and an addition added to provide office space (1996);
- The Davidson-Tucker house was restored and updated by the Stonewall Jackson House Foundation to serve as offices for the adjacent Stonewall Jackson House, now operated as a museum (1974 and, most recently, 2004);
- The train station was moved across the street by Washington and Lee to enable the University to expand the Lenfest Center and is now being renovated for contemporary office use (2005);
- The Roberson-Phalen House, on Jefferson Street, was purchased by HLF, the exterior restored and the building recently sold for private use (2006); and
- Most recently, the Dutch Inn, located on Washington Street, was completely renovated and updated (2006).

Other preservation related efforts are worthy of note. In 2006, the City established two Residential Historic Neighborhood Conservation Districts. Architectural Review Board approval is now required for demolition of any building within these districts as well as for any new buildings constructed within these districts. Creation of these districts was the result of coordinated efforts involving the City Planning Commission, HLF, the Rockbridge Historical Society and other local citizens committed to local historic preservation.

Responding to concerns initially expressed by HLF regarding the possibility of a catastrophic downtown fire similar to those which had occurred in several other historic downtowns, the City hired and trained a local fire marshall and established a process of regular inspections of both commercial and residential buildings in the downtown.

As a community, Lexington can be proud of its preservation efforts and successes. Buildings which can be seen while walking through the downtown area or driving through the residential neighborhoods bear evidence of Lexington's dedication to preserving its architectural history.

HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND HISTORIC DISTRICTS

The City of Lexington is well known for its outstanding architecture and remarkable record for historic preservation. Buildings in the downtown central business district, such as the Presbyterian Church, the Alexander-Withrow Building, the Willson-Walker House, and the Stonewall Jackson House, have gained national attention. Many of the handsome residences along Lee Avenue, South Main Street, Jefferson Street, and Jackson Avenue have been restored and add greatly to the architectural distinctiveness of the town.

The National Register of Historic Places, administered by the U. S. Department of the Interior, designates properties of local, state, and national significance. The Virginia Landmarks Register, administered by the Virginia Department of Historical Resources, is the Commonwealth's officially designated list of buildings, sites, structures, and historic districts that reflect the state's historical, architectural and archaeological significance.

There are three nationally registered historic districts within the City: Virginia Military Institute Historic District*; Washington & Lee University Historic District*, and the Lexington Historic District. The following individual properties within the City are included on the Virginia Landmarks Register and/or the National Register of Historic Places (as of March 2007): Alexander-Withrow House; Blandome; Col Alto; First Baptist Church; Stonewall Jackson House; Lee Chapel*; Lexington & Covington Turnpike Toll House; Lexington Presbyterian Church; Lylburn Downing School (ca. 1927 portion); Mulberry Hill; Reid-White-Philbin House; Stono; and the Virginia Military Institute Barracks*. (An asterisk {*} denotes National Historic Landmark status.)

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

There is no doubt that the local government, local preservation organizations, and the broader community recognize the value of the historic character of this community and the contribution of each of its historic buildings to the economic vitality and quality of life in this community. This plan recognizes the role and value of preservation and also acknowledges that there may be times when, to meet other goals, needs or requirements, a building may have to be demolished to achieve other community purposes.

GOAL: Encourage and support local preservation, rehabilitation, and beautification efforts in the City.

There are significant Federal and State tax credits available to those who restore historic buildings to meet the standards contained in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings which can have significant beneficial economic benefits and facilitate appropriate renovation of those buildings.

Many tax related programs are complicated and require the advice and participation of someone who understands the details. HLF has agreed to serve as the local contact for possible use of this program to facilitate the major restoration of significant buildings in Lexington. (Federal Tax Credits are being used by the new owner of the Sheridan Building to undertake significant renovations to that building.)

GOAL: Promote the use of federal, state, and local preservation incentives.

Previously, the Lexington Downtown Development Association, as a qualified member of the Virginia Main Street Program, received free design assistance from an architectural firm with expertise in historic preservation. Since LDDA has been disbanded, the City is no longer eligible for this program. It will require a commitment of significant local resources to replicate this program. HLF has expressed interest in funding such a program.

GOAL: Consider providing design assistance to downtown businesses and property owners.

In the past all of the local banks participated in a revolving loan fund to finance building upgrades in the downtown. With the transfer of decision making from Lexington to regional centers as local banks have been acquired by larger institutions, support for this effort has not been sustained since local managers can no longer make commitments. It is not likely that this program can be reconstituted. HLF has periodically managed a revolving loan fund to assist in the renovation of historic buildings. The most recent renovation was funded by private donations, foundation grants and a \$40,000 donation from the City. The fund has been used to assist in the renovation of the Lyric Theater and the Roberson-Phalen House and the purchase of the Miller's House, which HLF subsequently gave to the City of Lexington

for use as an interpretive museum at Jordan's Point Park. Financial support, for rehabilitation or renovation, is currently available from this loan fund.

GOAL: Encourage the Historic Lexington Foundation and/or local lending institutions fund and sponsor a rehabilitation loan pool for downtown buildings.

The City has made significant investments in public improvements to enhance the historic character of the community. It should continue to identify and fund projects to accomplish this objective. One such project which has been identified is streetscape improvements along Randolph Street, between Nelson and Washington Streets. Possible improvements are the underground installation of utility lines, improved pedestrian access and enhancements around the new Courthouse.

GOAL: Continue to invest in public infrastructure improvements to further enhance the historic character of Lexington.

The City owns and maintains several historic buildings and historic sites including the Ruffner School, Stonewall Jackson Cemetery, Lylburn Downing Community Center and the Miller's House at Jordan's Point. The City also owns Jordan's Point Park, an historic site with artifacts from the industrial era remaining, including the wharf wall, the gauge dock, the abutment for the covered bridges that served Lee Highway, and the remaining foundations of the mills and warehouses which once occupied this land.

Plans have been completed for the restoration of the Miller's House, the last remaining structure at Jordan's Point. The City is committed to this restoration. The covered bridge abutment is completing restoration from damage caused by flooding of the Maury River. A preservation and maintenance plan is being completed for the many fine rock walls and foundations which remain at Jordan's Point. The City should continue to ensure that all of these facilities continue to receive the level of maintenance that they deserve.

GOAL: Remain a responsible steward of city-owned historic properties

The City's present design guidelines used by the Architectural Review Board are general in nature. Many communities with similar interest in historic preservation have prepared more detailed design guidelines focused more on the nature of the specific buildings in that community. The City has not had the staff or the resources to prepare detailed design guidelines. If the City received Certified Local Government (CLG) status, funding assistance should be available for such an effort. The City would look for leadership in this effort from local preservation groups.

GOAL: Work with Historic Lexington Foundation and other local preservation groups to apply for and receive Certified Local Government (CLG) status from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to gain access to dedicated federal funds for preservation projects and planning

GOAL: Produce and disseminate Design Guidelines to assist property owners planning renovation, rehabilitation, new construction, or other substantive changes for historic properties.

Many communities with extensive historic resources and a strong local commitment to those resources, prepare a Comprehensive Heritage Preservation Plan to amplify the contents of their Comprehensive Plan related to historic preservation. The City should consider this as the ultimate goal of the planning efforts previously described. This plan would be prepared in partnership with the local preservation organizations active in the City and would include public participation in its development.

GOAL: Consider the possibility of the ultimate development of a Comprehensive Heritage Preservation Plan, in concert with local history and preservation organizations, that supports economic vitality, enhances quality of life and fosters community pride and awareness.