

# HERITAGE & COMMUNITY CHARACTER

## Part 1: Background

### Section 1: Introduction

This section discusses the history of the community, and identifies historic structures and areas of historical significance, including the Round Hill National Register Historic District. Expectations for character, design and architecture are also discussed.

### Section 2: Historical Perspective

The Town of Round Hill is located in the western section of Loudoun County along Route 7 at the base of the Blue Ridge. Round Hill was named for a 910-foot-high hill, named Round Top, approximately two miles southwest of town. No one really knows how old this given name is, but in the first court order of Loudoun County in 1757, there was a road order which set out a group of “viewers” (people who decided which way an important road was to go) whose decision was that the road from Leesburg to Winchester would be located on the north side of the “round hill”. In 1731, the first tract of land in today’s Round Hill was granted to Benjamin Grayson and, ten years later, additional land was granted to William Cox and Thomas Gregg. When the Leesburg and Snickers’ Gap Turnpike (Route 7) was built in the 1830’s, a small store opened and in 1858, the area received its first U.S. Post Office.

Round Hill began as a working class community serving the needs of tourists escaping the heat of Washington, D.C. The Town was the end of the W&OD train line from 1875 until 1896, when the line was extended to Bluemont. Early businesses included rooming houses, markets, a bank, a doctor’s office, a farrier, and a tombstone manufacturer. Businesses then as now were interspersed among residences. The majority of today’s homes within the corporate limits were built prior the end of the 1920’s.

On February 5, 1900, the Virginia General Assembly incorporated the Town of Round Hill and appointed town commissioners. In May of that year, the Townsmen elected their first Mayor, George T. Ford who later became a state senator. The first council met in the store owned by the mayor which also housed the post office. In the late 1980’s, the Ford’s Store property was purchased by the town and renovated to house the town offices. The train station, located on the northern end of Main Street, continues to be an identifying element of the town’s past as well.

When incorporated, Round Hill had 10 streets that were lit with coal lamps. These lights were electrified in 1919. In 1913 the town developed its own water delivery system but many residents remained on their own wells. The Town expanded the water system in 1915 to include a spring fed reservoir on Scotland Heights. In 1926, all town privies were to be updated and conversion to septic tanks was encouraged. By 1978 the Town had constructed a wastewater treatment plant and sewer lines.

Today's Round Hill has much the same scale and character as the Round Hill of the past. The residents continue to be a mix of social and economic groups. Although the train stopped coming here in 1939, Round Hill remains a haven away from the hustle and bustle of life to the east.

### Section 3: Historic Buildings

(Refer to Map 5-1 Historic Buildings). The following is a list of some of the existing residences, churches and commercial establishments which were part of Round Hill when the town was incorporated in 1900. There are numerous other buildings which were built soon after this date as a result of business encouraged by the railroad. Many of these early 20th century buildings are also significant to the historical character of Round Hill.

#### Loudoun Street

1.	Potts Farm House (29 E. Loudoun)	1774
2.	Frame House (28 E. Loudoun)	1850 (c)
3.	Stone House (20 E. Loudoun) (first general store & post office)	1858/1857
4.	Chamblin Boarding House (1 E. Loudoun)	1874
5.	Round Hill United Methodist Church (11 W. Loudoun)	1889
6.	Corner Hall/ Nannie Cross Ballenger's Tea Room (19 E. Loudoun)	1890
7.	Castle Hall (11 E. Loudoun)	1890
8.	Harvey Fields' House (18 E. Loudoun)	1890
9.	Howe's Store (6 W. Loudoun)	1890
10.	Mt. Calvary Episcopal Church (16 E. Loudoun)	1892
11.	Kuhlman Home (30 W. Loudoun)	1892
12.	Lodge House (31 W. Loudoun)	1892/1895
13.	Preston Boarding House (25 W. Loudoun)	
14.	Frame House (21 W. Loudoun)	1898
15.	Hammerly House (15 W. Loudoun)	1898/1897

#### Main Street

16.	Field's Farm	1832 (c)
17.	Chamblin House (3 Copeland Way)	1850 (c)
18.	Ford's Store (23 Main)	1872
19.	Washington and Ohio Railroad Station (35 Main)	1875
20.	Frame House (41 Main)	1876
21.	Arthur Hall House and Store (31 & 29 Main)	
22.	Hillcrest- Copeland House (22 Main)	1874/1880
23.	Dr. Copeland's Office (20 Main)	1880
24.	Mt. Zion Baptist Church (28 Main)	1881
25.	Nanny Nichols Boarding House (40 Main)	1890
26.	Ford's House (26 Main)	1890
27.	Howell's Nursery (5 Main)	1900

## **Section 4: Round Hill National Register Historic District**

(Refer to Map 5-2 Historic District). A comprehensive Historic Survey was conducted in the Town in 2008 and the detailed data and mapping necessary was submitted to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources to nominate the proposed Round Hill Historic District to both the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places. These designations became official in December 2008 and May 2009 respectively.

The Historic District Map at the end of this chapter shows the properties included in the Historic Survey, and the small numbers shown refer to the individual property survey identification numbers. The numbers included in circles show where photographs were taken. Properties are listed as either “contributing” or “non-contributing” to the District, based on the three areas of significance that were determining factors in deciding how resources would be classified when the survey was conducted; they were: architecture, commerce/trade and transportation, and on the period of significance as 1850 to 1958. All non-contributing resources were, therefore, so noted for either being constructed after 1958 or as no longer possessing historic integrity because of major alterations and additions.

## **Part 2: Opportunities & Challenges**

### **Section 1: Historic Preservation**

(Refer to Map 5-3 Heritage & Preservation Overlay). The 1993 Comprehensive Plan set forth the goal of developing an Architectural Review Board paired with Architectural Design Standards to regulate the architecture of historic buildings in Town. While this goal has never been implemented, due to the lack of public support, the Town may consider the creation of an organization or committee that will inspire support for voluntary historic preservation efforts, and could organize a variety of projects such as educational lectures, tax credit workshops and design awards.

The Heritage & Preservation Overlay shows the Gateway Corridors along Main Street and Loudoun Street. The historic buildings along these corridors define the Town’s identity and make a lasting impression on all visitors driving through Round Hill. Any potential future historic preservation organizations, groups or committees should focus most of their attention on these buildings for coordinating preservation efforts that could double as economic development projects. Such projects could include walking tours or interpretative signage at landmark buildings. In addition to the Gateway Corridors, the Heritage & Preservation Overlay references the remaining parcels that once made up the Round Hill Train Industry known as the "Train District." The Town supports the rehabilitation of any of those buildings in order to return them (as close as possible) to their original condition.

### **Section 2: Defining Historic Buildings**

When discussing historic preservation, the term “historic building” is used quite frequently. One challenge that the Town has faced during the Comprehensive Plan update has been trying to define what is historic in the eyes of Town officials. There is a shared belief that for a small town, any historic preservation efforts need to be directed towards historically significant buildings not just buildings that have hit a certain age. There are some buildings in Town that may pass an “age” test but do not add anything of value to the Town historic character. Town officials describe historic

buildings as those that are 75 years old or greater. A secondary method for the Town to consider if a building in Round Hill is significant is to look at the National Historic District Registry. The Town had to apply for its National Registry District Nomination which involved a complex application process with many different conditions and requirements to determine if a building or structure can earn the title “contributing resource.” A contributing resource is a building, site, structure, or object that adds to the historic significance of a property or district. In comparison, a noncontributing resource is a building, site, structure, or object that does not add to the historic significance of a property or district.

In larger municipalities, the National Historic District is a small subset of the city or town. However, in Round Hill the National Historic District encompasses the majority of the Town. This means when people describe the desire to protect and preserve the character of Round Hill, they are actually supporting the protection and the preservation of the historically significant buildings. If these buildings disappeared tomorrow and were replaced by modern suburban houses, the Town would feel like it had lost the “bones” of the community. It would feel hollow without an identity, without the historic houses that define the Town. It is the historic character of these houses and those new houses that have successfully recreated this historic character, that make Round Hill unique.

In comparison, there is a clear difference between the houses within the National Historic Register District and the new subdivisions in the Joint Land Management Area. Historic preservation efforts are needed in Round Hill for more reasons than just protecting individual historic treasures but protecting the Town identity as a whole.

# Heritage & Community Character

## Goals, Objectives & Strategies

**Overall Goal:** Advocate for an environment with separate and unique features that create memorable moods and human experiences, protect and encourage family and community life and establish a sense of place by way of visual and natural elements that are experienced and observed:

**Goal 1: Foster the protection and preservation of historic buildings and local heritage sites, with special attention directed towards those buildings or sites tied to the founding of Round Hill.**

- a) **Objective:** Embrace the Round Hill National Register District as a notable recognition that serves as a source of pride for the Town and a tool for historic preservation efforts
  1. **Strategy:** Keep a copy of the Round Hill National Register District Nomination, with the list of contributing and non-contributing historic resources at the Town Office at all times, as well as feature a link to the document on the Town Website.
  2. **Strategy:** Develop a brochure and a map explaining the purpose and significance of the Round Hill National Register District.
  3. **Strategy:** Advocate for a recognition program to honor one contributing historic building in the Round Hill National Register District once a year with a historic plaque that prioritizes selections by age and landmark status.
  4. **Strategy:** Identify, evaluate and protect historic and archaeological resources by submitting an update to the Round Hill National Register District Nomination once every ten years.
  
- b) **Objective:** Increase the levels of community awareness of historic building and heritage site preservation by sharing information and engaging stakeholders, as well as the general public, in the preservation process:
  1. **Strategy:** Develop ways to encourage and educate historic property owners interested in properly identifying, interpreting, establishing and maintaining a heritage tourism site.
  2. **Strategy:** Establish a walking tour for local schools that will identify local historic sites or events to convey the history and heritage of Round Hill.
  3. **Strategy:** Partner with Visit Loudoun to implement heritage tourism strategies.
  4. **Strategy:** Develop a Round Hill heritage awareness program to promote Round Hill's heritage and historical assets to local residents.

**Goal 2: Advocate that new development or redevelopment should not impact the integrity or authenticity of the historic character of the Town**

- a) Objective: Expect new development, redevelopment or rehabilitation projects to incorporate or be compatible with the current identifying elements of the Town, when reviewing rezoning applications, special exception applications or future Round Hill Design Guidelines language.
1. Strategy: Support new development or redevelopment projects in the National Register District that are compatible in the size and character to the contributing buildings of the District.
  2. Strategy: Support new development or redevelopment projects outside of the National Register District to incorporate current identifying elements of the contributing buildings of the District.
  3. Strategy: Support new additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction projects of historic buildings or heritage sites that are compatible with the existing historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion.
- b) Objective: Encourage attractive and historically sensitive land development projects.
1. Strategy: Adopt the Round Hill Design Guidelines not as regulations, but guidelines to assist the Planning Commission and Town Council; developed through a public process and formally adopted by the Town Council used to promote new development or redevelopment compatibility with adjacent historic structures and the overall community character of the Town.
  2. Strategy: If the Round Hill Design Guidelines have not been adopted, the following factors shall be taken into consideration during the review of a rezoning application or special exception application by the Planning Commission and the Town Council:
    - a. Building mass and height in relation to surrounding development
    - b. Setback and placement of the building on the lot in relation to the setback and placement of adjacent buildings
    - c. Building Orientation
    - d. Number, placement and proportion of the doors and windows
    - e. Size, shape and proportion of entrance features such as porches
    - f. Feedback from the 2015 Visual Survey conducted during the 2015 Public Input Meetings

3. Strategy: Consider the establishment of a Gateway Corridor Overlay Districts in order to accomplish the following:
  - a. Ensure the compatibility of development, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse proposals with the historic resources identified in this Comprehensive Plan
  - b. Increase public awareness of the natural, scenic, historic, architectural, and cultural resources near and outside the Round Hill National Historic District
  - c. Preserve and protect corridors along arterial streets or roadways designated as significant routes of travel as shown on the Heritage & Preservation Overlay Map
4. Strategy: Study the Train District and prepare a Master Plan for future coordination of the buildings with the minimum goals to develop an educational brochure, a set of interpretive signage and a series of recommended future uses. The property owners of the buildings located in the Train District will be invited to be active participants in developing the Master Plan.

**Goal 3: Advocate for the structural stabilization, rehabilitation or restoration of the historic buildings and heritage sites in the Town.**

- a) Objective: Establish a Heritage Resources Committee, not as an Architectural Review Board, but to accomplish the following strategies:
  1. Strategy: Inspire residents and business owners to preserve the community character and unique identity of the Town through voluntary home renovation, historic preservation and façade improvement projects
  2. Strategy: Encourage historic preservation efforts through public outreach, education, marketing, incentive programs and local special events
  3. Strategy: Recommend historic preservation and heritage resource programs to the Town Council; and if authorized or directed by Town Council, the Committee will develop and implement recommended programs.
  4. Strategy: Educate the public on the benefits of Federal and State historic tax incentives.
  5. Strategy: Host an annual rehabilitation or restoration award program.
  6. Strategy: Promote the Train District and the Gateway Corridors as priority areas for historic preservation outreach and awareness, as shown on the Heritage & Preservation Overlay Map.
  7. Strategy: Work with the Town Council to develop a “Heritage Resources Master Plan.”

2. **Objective:** Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic structures and heritage sites in Round Hill, when reviewing rezoning applications, special exception applications or Zoning Ordinance amendments.
  1. Strategy: Consider removing text in the Zoning Ordinance which could prevent heritage resource protection, preservation and adaptive reuse of historic properties
  2. Strategy: Limit requirements on historic buildings that would require design features that detract from the authenticity of the site, endanger the integrity of the resource or prevent the adaptive reuse of the site
  3. Strategy: Require that additional parking, lighting or signage requirements necessitated by the reuse of a historic structure are appropriately sized and/or shielded to minimize adverse impacts on the character of the surrounding area.
3. **Objective:** Encourage development that works to prevent destroying historic buildings; and if dismantling of a historic building has been chosen as the proper course of action by the property owner, or if a historic building has been demolished by neglect, consider the following when reviewing rezoning applications or special exception applications:
  1. Strategy: Support the proper dismantling of a historic building if it is structurally unstable, if the majority of the structural integrity of it has been compromised and/or if incompatible additional or modifications over time have depleted the historic value.
  2. Strategy: Consider a requirement that there is photo documentation of the interior and exterior of a building submitted to the Town for historic records before any dismantling or demolition begins.
  3. Strategy: Support that some of the remaining archeological features of a historic building are incorporated into the site design of the development project to avoid having to rebuild or reconstruct the building, such as the foundation walls
  4. Strategy: Support that new construction on the site incorporate features in the new building that are similar to features of the previous historic building in design, color, texture, and/or material as a tribute or homage to the history of the site.
  5. Strategy: Encourage the owner to donate or sell salvaged building materials for the purpose of preservation or reuse.