

Chapter

11

CULTURAL RESOURCES



"Main Street Peterborough 1935"

Egg Tempera on Masonite by Gregorio Prestopino, MacDowell Colony Fellow

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Chapter 11

I. Introduction

The New Hampshire state statutes that address the purpose and description of a master plan (RSA 674:2) include a cultural and historic resources section as one of 14 optional sections of a master plan; the historic resources are addressed in Chapter 10 of this Master Plan. The section should identify cultural resources and ways to protect or preserve them from the impact of other land use tools. As described by the Master Plan Steering Committee, the goals of the Cultural Resources chapter are as follows:

1. Identify Peterborough's cultural resources, highlighting current strengths;
2. Assess the economic impact of the arts and related cultural activities;
3. Offer recommendations for continued artistic vitality; and
4. Identify opportunities for growth beneficial to the citizens of Peterborough.



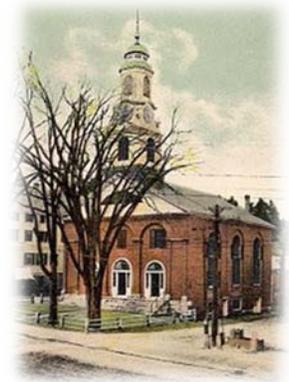
II. Peterborough's Artistic Heritage

With the establishment of the Summer Lyceum in 1828 and the first publicly funded library in the U.S. in 1833, Peterborough citizens eagerly demonstrated the intensity of their cultural¹ curiosity and civic pride.

¹ Throughout this report, the words *art*, *artistic*, *cultural* and *culture* are used to describe the full spectrum of creative activities on view every day within our town. Literary, performing, fine and folk arts are included as different facets of the human need to create and discover new stories, things and ideas.

As evidenced in the report that follows, this spirit remains very much alive today. While the industrial and digital revolutions have effectively made the world much smaller, the arts have only increased in importance to the town’s vitality and well-being.

Over the decades, Peterborough’s nonprofit arts organizations have self-organized to fill the community’s need for creative expression, extending the benefits of the arts to all. Given Peterborough’s established role as the educational, cultural and economic hub for the all the towns between the Monadnock peaks, the following document is offered in hopes of strengthening ties within Peterborough as well as those connecting Peterborough to the Monadnock region and beyond.



*The Unitarian Church,
location for the Summer
Lyceum*

In the 19th century Abiel Abbot founded the Summer Lyceum and the Town Library; in the 20th century Mary Cheney Schofield and Mary Morison’s vision and generosity expanded the town’s cultural horizons. While there are too many arts organizations to be comprehensively listed here, highlights would include the Historical Society (1902), the MacDowell Colony (1907), Mariarden outdoor theater (1922-23), Peterborough Players (1933), the Sharon Arts Center (1946), Monadnock Chorus and Orchestra (1959), Monadnock Music (1966), Monadnock Summer Lyceum (1828, reestablished 1969), Peterborough Folk Music Society (1975), Children and the Arts Festival (1994), and the Mariposa Museum (2002). We can be certain that Peterborough would not be what it is today without the many writers, visual artists, craftsmen and gallery workers, musicians and music professionals, architects, designers, actors and theatre professionals, and educators and administrators who’ve contributed so much to our town.



Peterborough Town Library, 1906

The longevity of the above organizations should not be mistaken for stasis. While it is obvious that the arts

depend upon individual passions and public participation, it is equally true that they must be perennially reinvented to remain viable and relevant. Whether public or private, art or craft, hobby or profession, we encourage our town to take steps to sustain tomorrow’s opportunities to build community through the arts. All citizens and civic leaders can contribute to the sustenance of the cultural environment where future artists, programs and organizations will thrive.



MacDowell Colony Residents - 1954

The importance of Peterborough’s cultural resources cannot be overemphasized, and the need to establish a vehicle for cooperation between public, private and non-profit sectors

dovetails nicely with conclusions put forth in other chapters of the Master Plan. The *Historic Resources* chapter, by chronicling a broad range of Peterborough’s arts and cultural events, reminds us of the importance of honoring the past. Their report included this passage: “. . . the cultural life of Peterborough, ranging from dance to opera to live theater, popular and classical musical presentations, renowned speaker forums, children in the arts programs, art galleries and museums, the MacDowell Colony – perhaps the world’s leading gathering place for artists – all set in venues that make Peterborough so distinctive.” The need for affordable housing identified in the *Population and Housing* chapter are echoed and reinforced by the region’s artistic community. Last but not least, a poll conducted for the *Open Space* report demonstrated that 33% of residents listed “culture and the arts” as one of their top-three reasons for living in Peterborough. And as for *Economic Vitality*, the local arts scene has capacity to act as an engine for economic growth if we can improve our ability to attract visitors to the region.

III. Directory of Cultural Resources

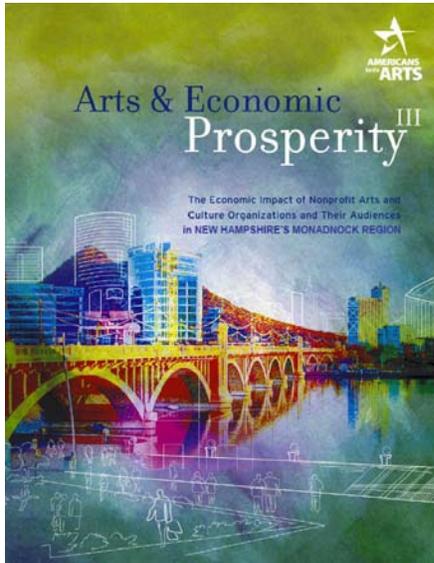
Although cultural resources flow freely across town boundaries, this directory focuses on Peterborough in an attempt to make it most relevant to the Master Plan. The directory of resources presented in this section includes individuals, businesses, and institutions contributing to the cultural fabric of the Peterborough community. Included are listings related to the performing arts (music, theater, dance), the fine arts (painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, graphic design), and the literary arts (fiction, non-fiction, poetry), as well as advertising and internet design. In addition, the Peterborough community is rich with educational opportunities in the arts, and these venues and institutions – serving both adults and children – are likewise included in the directory. While attempting to be inclusive, this list will inevitably fail at being comprehensive. The Marketing and Promotion section identifies opportunities to bring this list to life and broadcast it more widely.

Because it includes metropolitan Manchester and Nashua in the east, Hillsborough County is the most populous in the state and the most densely populated. Peterborough, with 6,284 citizens², is the largest town in western Hillsborough County. As a medium-sized town in the midst of many smaller communities, Peterborough’s positive reputation is built on its association with Mt. Monadnock and the quantity and quality of its arts and cultural offerings. The inventory in Appendix A illustrates the concentration of Peterborough’s arts and arts-related organizations.

² 2010 U.S. Census

IV. Arts Alive & Economic Impact

While it is challenging to quantify the effect of the arts in our lives, there is little argument that the arts are integral to the definition of what it means to be human. Although quantitative and qualitative data about personal experiences of the arts are beyond the scope of this report, we have included an analysis of the monetary transactions driven by the arts. By looking at the commercial activity generated by the arts, Appendix B (summary) and Appendix C (full report) demonstrate the economic benefits that are interwoven with the arts.



In 2008, Monadnock Arts Alive! commissioned an economic impact study of the arts in the Monadnock region. Americans for the Arts, the nation’s leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America, collected and analyzed relevant data as part of their ongoing research³. Using financial data collected from arts organizations and surveys collected from audiences primarily in Keene and Peterborough, the study concluded that the arts mean business in the Monadnock region. Using input/output analysis, a proven statistical tool, the study found that the arts contribute more than \$16 million annually to the regional economy. Local non-profits employ at least 230 locally⁴ and, when audience spending is factored in, account for at least 477 jobs in the region.

While the study demonstrates the vibrancy of our local cultural economy, it also reveals that, on average, similarly sized regions attract a larger audience share from outside the region. Because dollars spent by visitors greatly bolster the local economy, an increase in cultural tourism could provide an important boost to the region’s economic vitality. In Appendix C, the narrative on page 7 and tables on page 8 show that arts spending in the Monadnock region is below the median. This makes some sense, given that the Monadnock region’s population (~130k) is near the lower limit of the comparison group (100-250k) and, rather than being concentrated in a single metropolitan area, our population is dispersed in numerous small towns. These metrics reveal that Peterborough and the region as a whole have room to grow in this important sector of the economy.

The key lesson from Arts & Economic Prosperity III is that communities that invest in the arts reap the additional benefit of jobs, economic growth, and a quality of life that positions those communities to compete in our 21st century creative economy. – Robert Lynch, President, American for the Arts

³ The Arts and Economic Prosperity

⁴ The study defines jobs in terms of “full time equivalents”; the actual number of individuals employed in the arts sector is significantly higher since part-time and seasonal positions are combined when converting to full time equivalents

Moving from the regional to the local, the chart below demonstrates the economic impact of just the four largest cultural organizations in town.

Table #1: Economic and Cultural Metrics for Leading Arts Organizations¹ in Peterborough for the Year 2011					
Employees (FTE)	Operating Expenditures	Wages and Benefits	Volunteers	Ticketed Public Events	Free Public Events
53	\$5,081,545	\$2,594,149	334	211	262

¹ Broke Art/Thing in the Spring, Launch Art, MacDowell Colony, Mariposa Museum, Monadnock Art Tour, Monadnock Players, Peterborough Town Library, Sharon Arts Center

V. The Arts Infrastructure

The arts infrastructure in Peterborough can be described as belonging to three categories:

- 1) Physical structures such as libraries, museums, theaters and galleries
- 2) Individuals devoted to the arts, including children, artists, audience, patrons/donors, and organizational leaders
- 3) Social bonds between individuals and groups developed and maintained through participation in the arts

Much of the physical infrastructure can be seen by looking at the Cultural Inventory, Appendix A in this report. A broad variety of events and productions animate all of these facilities: the Peterborough Players, the Lucy Hurlin Theater, the Peterborough Historical Society, the Sharon Arts Center, the Mariposa Museum and the MacDowell Colony. In addition to the dedicated arts spaces, many commercial facilities also include arts programming, making them even more meaningful to the community.

The Town House and Town Library, as facilities owned by the people of Peterborough, are critical components of the arts infrastructure. As the largest rentable hall, the Town House plays a critically important role for the arts and civic life in Peterborough. Churches and parish halls are frequently utilized for smaller concerts, films, readings and lectures (e.g. Monadnock Summer Lyceum at the Unitarian Church, music recitals in the parish hall at the Episcopal Church, etc.). In addition to these non-profit and civic spaces, many organizations host arts programming alongside their primary function: visual art at Aesop’s Tables, Nonie’s, the Bagel Mill and storefront windows in the Granite Block; readings and live music at the Toadstool; cultural events at Monadnock Country Club, and RiverMead. Given the local population, the physical infrastructure provides abundant possibilities for creative expression.



Children and the Arts, 2010

Whether funding, administering, producing, maintaining, promoting, performing, or attending local arts events, important relationships are routinely created, strengthened and expanded through the arts. The Children and the Arts Festival is an excellent example, a relatively new organization that brings together arts organizations, families, and businesses as well as civic and municipal leaders. Like the culture of participation in politics, the arts depend upon our local schools for initiating and empowering young artists and audiences. Art enrichment through the ConVal School District provides a bridge for our students to arts organizations in the area and helps them find ways to contribute to the arts themselves. If we fail to educate our children in the

arts, not only will their lives be poorer for the omission, but we can also expect that they will not be prepared to participate in the arts later in life. While our arts organizations live by this tenet of inclusion, civic leaders help is also critical. By participating in local arts activities and encouraging participation by their employees and peers, elected and appointed municipal officials can help the town “walk the talk” as a community centered on the arts.

VI. Marketing and Public Relations

A. Branding

The marketing of cultural activities in the region is currently the responsibility of each individual organization. Local newspapers, websites, social networks and direct mail/email promotion seem to be the most commonly employed media.

A panel was convened in 2009 to gather input from local leaders including Jack Burnett of the Chamber of Commerce, Jim Fletcher of the advertizing firm Fletcher and Wilder, Cy Gregg of Depot Square and Jamie Trowbridge of Yankee Magazine. The group unanimously asserted the importance of branding in the promotion of the Peterborough region as a destination for cultural tourism.

Branding would entail creation of a logo and possibly a tag line that together would identify the Peterborough cultural experience. By branding all local arts events under a common umbrella, our organizations would effectively market the region whenever they promoted their own events. Through this overlap, individual organizations’ marketing would be strengthened and the Town and region become more clearly identified as an arts destination.

The Peterborough Arts Council first formed in 1995, and by 1998 had collaborated to produce a brochure representing all local arts organization with a photo, brief summary narrative and contact information. The brochure was distributed through the Chamber of Commerce and through realtors in their efforts to market Peterborough as a place to live

and work. Today, the internet provides a much more efficient and scalable platform for sharing this kind of information. Promotion at the level of town (Peterborough), region (Monadnock) and state (NH) can be pursued simultaneously. The annual Open Studio Art Tour by Monadnock Art / Friends of the Dublin Art Colony provides an example of a program that has successfully marketed itself to a broad audience, including Granite-Staters beyond the Monadnock region, and adventurers from Vermont and Massachusetts. In a similar fashion, arts organizations in similar fields could unite to build a regional identity (e.g. folk music). Building such connections would also create new opportunities for cooperative scheduling and/or joint promotion.

VII. Recommendations

A. Web Site Promotion

A website is needed to present a comprehensive picture of local arts and cultural activities. If developed for Peterborough, such a site could be linked to all Peterborough-centric web sites such as the Chamber of Commerce, the Monadnock Ledger-Transcript, Depot Square, Arts Alive! and NH365.org. By making the arts information more readily available and presenting arts programming side by side with ads for local restaurants and hotels, the region's identity as a destination will be enhanced.

B. Improved Marketing Expertise

Because marketing only succeeds as a sustained effort, one of the best ways to strengthen our collective ability would be to establish an ongoing series of workshops led by marketing professionals. Helping local arts organizations develop effective, low-cost marketing/promotion strategies echo the parable of "teach a man to fish". Convening those involved in the arts to discuss opportunities for cross promotion is the natural starting place for this effort, in partnership with local businesses that would benefit from success in this realm.

C. Peterborough Arts Council

The Peterborough Arts Council, currently dormant, holds promise as a vehicle to help realize the marketing goals described above. Funding for these efforts will require participation across the public, private and artistic (nonprofit) sectors.

In cooperation with downtown merchants and municipal government, the Arts Council could be empowered to pursue a variety of goals that would benefit the local community:

1. Educate the public on the importance of the arts to the region and act as a champion for the arts in public discourse
2. Act as a coordinator for the arts calendar (Monadnock Arts Tour, Children and the Arts Day, etc.)

3. In addition to representatives of leading arts organizations, include individual artists as members of the Arts Council
4. Build and maintain connections with state and regional arts and cultural leaders (examples include New Hampshire Arts Satellite Network, Monadnock Arts Alive!, New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, New Hampshire State Council on the Arts).
5. Distribute information regarding funding opportunities (private and public foundations, municipal, state and Federal grants) and encourage joint applications where appropriate
6. Continue collaboration with Monadnock Arts Alive! in tracking the arts' economic impact in the region
7. Bring business and Town leadership together to develop a comprehensive marketing/public relations plan for Peterborough as an arts destination. Coordinate and possibly consolidate web sites promoting the arts – Town, Chamber of Commerce, Ledger-Transcript, Depot Square, and individual cultural organizations
8. Assist the Town in developing criteria and a process for subsidizing rental rates for arts programming at the Town House and possibly other Town owned venues.
9. Assist the Town and Chamber of Commerce where appropriate in attracting new businesses to the Town
10. Develop set of simple metrics that can be used to track success of marketing and promotion

D. Availability of Downtown Space for the Arts and for Artists

The short term exhibits and galleries featured in the Granite Block offer an example of creative use of unoccupied rental properties in Peterborough. Commercial property owners could be encouraged to provide empty commercial space to artists for temporary use as studio or gallery space. A fiscal agent would be needed to act as a liaison between artists or organizations and the building owners. The Peterborough Arts Council could take on this role, whether incorporated as a 501(C) (3) or operating under the umbrella fiscal sponsorship of Monadnock Arts Alive! or a similar organization.



Improving the quality of the Town House infrastructure for cultural events and reducing or eliminating the rental fees for non-profits would provide a profound lift for local arts programming. Enhanced programming would in turn deliver a dramatic boost for downtown merchants by bringing more visitors into the town center. The task of vetting which individuals/organizations qualify for reduced rental rates could be shared with or delegated to the Peterborough Arts Council.

E. Town Support for the Arts

An excellent example of public-private partnership for the arts can be found in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Art-Speak was established as a result of the city's efforts to integrate the arts into its Master Plan in 2009. By supporting the organizations with office space and a part-time coordinator, a municipal employee, Portsmouth has successfully acted as a liaison between local businesses, arts organizations, audiences and artists. See Art-Speak summary page at Appendix D. By reconvening the Peterborough Arts Council, there will be opportunities to build local support for such an investment in the arts.



Town Administration and the Select Board can assist the Council in a variety of ways. All citizens will benefit from the Town's partnering with arts groups on grant applications for cultural advancement and in-kind support for arts events that enhance municipal pride.

By underwriting targeted advertisements in print and/or online media, the Town can use the arts to promote itself as a destination, thus strengthening the economic vitality of the local business community. The Town can reinforce Peterborough's identity as an arts destination by adding the cultural brand logo to its official letterhead and other general use documents.

VIII. Conclusion

It is clear from all the data gathered in this report that the arts have a broad and deep positive impact on the quality of life in the Town of Peterborough. The public, private, and non-profit sectors each have important roles to play to help assure the continued vitality of existing cultural assets while also nurturing future artistic innovations. By highlighting opportunities for cooperative action, this report represents a beginning. Positive results will depend on all participants' open-mindedness, creativity and ability to find common ground in future collaborations. By convening those who are committed to Peterborough's success under the banner of the arts, we fully expect that great things will happen.

By underwriting targeted advertisements in print and/or online media, the Town can use the arts to promote itself as a destination, thus strengthening the economic vitality of the local business community. The Town can reinforce Peterborough's identity as an arts destination by adding the cultural brand logo to its official letterhead and other general use documents.

NOTABLE QUOTES

From the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies “Arts Build Communities”, April 13, 2010

“Philadelphia is a city of neighborhoods and I can assure you that in each of our communities, you can feel the presence of the arts. The arts anchor our neighborhoods. They are an integral part of our civic identity, a vital part of the fabric of Philadelphia community life, a key ingredient in the education and enrichment of our children, as well as a major segment of our economy.”

The Honorable Michael A. Nutter

Mayor of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

“The arts in small communities have a profound impact on tourism. Tourism is North Dakota’s number two industry, second only to agriculture. Garrison, ND, with a population less than 1,500 people, is home to a Dickens Festival. I visited with their development director who told me that they are able to draw thousands of visitors to their community because of their vital and active arts council. Art, culture, history, and heritage have revitalized this community and made it a holiday destination for visitors who shop, eat in restaurants, buy gas, attend performances—in other words they positively impact the economy of this small town now and for the future.”

Terri Aldrich, Executive Director

Minot Area Council of the Arts

Minot, North Dakota

“The American arts community is a national asset and treasure with tremendous potential to contribute to the United States Government’s ability to deal with the national security challenges it faces. Its arsenal of art forms and capabilities can be shared and exchanged as part of larger government and interagency activities designed to increase cultural understanding between all nations. The arts community can do this in a way other instruments of national power cannot —remember the universal language is music.”

--Brigadier General Nolen Bivens, U.S. Army, Ret., as presented to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment & Related Agencies, April 13, 2010

“The key lesson from *Arts & Economic Prosperity III* is that communities that invest in the arts reap the additional benefit of jobs, economic growth, and a quality of life that positions those communities to compete in our 21st century creative economy. In my travels across the country, business and government leaders often talk to me about the challenges of funding the arts and other community needs amid shrinking resources. They worry about jobs and the economic performance of their community. How well are they competing in the high-stakes race to attract new businesses? Is their region a magnet for a skilled and creative workforce? I am continually impressed by their commitment to doing what is best for their constituents and to improving quality of life for all. The findings from *Arts & Economic Prosperity III* send a clear and welcome message: leaders who care about community and economic development can feel good about choosing to invest in the arts.”

--Robert L. Lynch, President and CEO, Americans for the Arts