

Executive Summary

Between January and June 2008, the Dorchester Historical Society (DHS) engaged Historic Preservation & Design (HPD) and Cavanaugh Stewart Design Associates (CSDA) to study the existing four (4) historic buildings on the Clapp Properties at 195 and 199 Boston Street in Dorchester, Boston, MA. Here, the 1806 William Clapp House, ca. 1765 Lemuel Clapp House, a ca. 1850 Barn and a ca. 1890 Carriage House stand on a parcel of land at the northwest corner of Enterprise and Boston Streets in the Dorchester neighborhood of Boston. All four buildings are National Register properties considered key historic landmarks associated with the headquarters property of the Dorchester Historical Society.

The study was undertaken to identify, detail, and address a number of preservation, education and environmental concerns.

There were strong feelings among all project participants that the Dorchester Historical Society's headquarters property, the Clapp family farmstead, should be used to teach the history of Dorchester through the viewpoint of the Clapp family's experiences through four centuries. There was a feeling that there should be a special emphasis on Dorchester's agricultural heritage both because the Clapp barn is one of the few remaining barns in the city and because much of Dorchester's history, and the Clapp family's history, was tied to agriculture and to related commercial activities such as tanning operations and horticultural research.

The participants in the planning process clearly identified the need for an enhanced visitor experience through the establishment of a visitor greeting area, better signage, clear pathways, new galleries indoors and out, and new educational features. At the same time, the consultant determined that repairs, alterations and improvements to the physical structures are required to effect these objectives.

The study recommends an enhanced visitor experience through:

Introducing the Property

Visitor Orientation Center. Relocate the Visitor Orientation Center from the William Clapp House to the centrally-located Carriage House, which will be made universally accessible.

Museum Shop. Relocate the Museum Shop from the William Clapp House to the Carriage House.

New Galleries/Educational Features

Interior Spaces

Universally Accessible Exhibits. Establish at least eight (8) new universally accessible exhibits relating to “Where is Dorchester?” “What is the Dorchester Historical Society?” as well as other subjects (Dorchester architecture, agriculture, industry, Clapp family, neighborhoods, etc.) in new galleries in basement of William Clapp House and the barn using digital slide show and audio/video technologies along with other exhibits located along the two new accessible paths.

Outdoor Spaces

Learning Galleries. The study concludes that the existing landscapes adjacent to the four historic DHS Clapp buildings can be developed relatively easily and appropriately into ten (10) new outdoor spaces and educational features. These are more fully described in the CSDA conceptual landscape masterplan narrative and accompanying illustrative plan. They include a Tannery Thicket, Orchard & Wall, Picnic & Learning Grove, etc.

Bark Mill Model. Near the reconstructed southeast corner stone wall, build a new operating model of a c. 1760 Dorchester Tannery Bark Mill, to help explain the original orientation and use of the old bark millstone at the center of the new Tannery Thicket.

Accessible Pathways. Develop two (2) new accessible paths on the property radiating from the new Visitor’s Orientation Center in the Carriage House: A **Barn Path** shall circulate to connect with new accessible galleries in the basement of the Carriage House and basement of the Barn; A **Back or Basement Path** shall circulate to connect with the Shrub Walk and a series of new accessible galleries, and a new accessible restroom, established in the back part of the house and basement of the William Clapp House. Model these new paths on the similar accessibility paths recently (2008) built at the Saugus Iron Works.

Stone Wall, Boston Street. Reconstruct the lost southeast corner stone wall that faced Boston Street between Enterprise Street (Willow Lane) and the William Clapp House, using the existing DHS historic photograph(s) as a reproduction guide.

Additional Landscape Improvements. Make additional landscape improvements with educational signage and interpretative materials as described in the landscape section and site plan relating to:

- A new dwarf fruit tree-lined parking area west of the Lemuel Clapp House;
- Period 1760s style Susanna Capen Clapp Memorial gardens adjacent to the Lemuel Clap House;
- A new Tannery Thicket with seating and interpretation near the Boston and Enterprise Street corner;
- A new Trustees Path leading to the William Clapp House east door;
- New plantings and shrub plantings (Heirloom Gardens) near the William Clapp House;
- A new Brothers' Orchard near the northeast corner of the property;
- A new picnic area (Picnic and Learning Grove) near the northwest corner of the property.
- Screen Wall, West Side. Near the southwest corner of the property, develop a new screen wall to block views across the historically inappropriate landscape (paved parking area) of the neighboring Verizon property to the west. This screen wall might be a new painted vertical wood board flush-boarded fence on a landscaped/gardened strip of soil supported by a stone retaining wall.

Signage. Remove the existing illuminated Dorchester Historical Society sign on the lawn, and replace it with a remotely illuminated hand carved and painted wood sign attached to the barns or outbuildings. Add consistently-designed signage to the property to make movement more clear.

Repairs, Improvements, Alterations to Support Programmatic Plans

Reconstruct North Addition to Barn. Reconstruct the long-lost North Addition of the Barn to serve as a new storage facility for lawn-mowers, lawn care, etc., holding the equipment now stored in Tack Room at southeast corner of the barn. Use analysis of existing historic photographs to guide an accurate reconstruction.

Barn repairs. Undertake a wide range of acutely needed barn repairs, including structural timber frame (and sill) repairs, wood shingle siding replacement, window repairs, door repairs, and replacement of wood shingle roof(s). Restore the long lost wooden fish weathervane to the top of the east gable.

Restore gate. Restore and/or reconstruct the long-lost Clapp property gate and fence line that used to connect the South Shed of the Barn with the north side of the Carriage House.

Carriage House structural repairs. Undertake structural repairs, siding replacements, and roof repairs to the Carriage House to allow for the creation of a new Visitor's Center and to emphasize the privy housed in the south side of the Carriage House.

Remove the bunker. Remove the ca. 1950 Modernist style concrete "bunker" attached to the southeast corner of the William Clapp House, and restore a ca. 1890 landscape and William Clapp House south stair on the south side of the William Clapp House.

New accessible restroom. Establish a new universally accessible public restroom on the accessible Back or Basement Path, employing the conceptual plans printed with this report.

Barn, Carriage House, property repairs. Make other barn, carriage house and property repairs as needed and as recommended to ensure the long term care and preservation of the four significant buildings [see full list under "Prioritized Preliminary Repair Needs—Clapp Properties].

Recommended Surveys/Research/Analysis

Ground Penetrating Radar. Conduct Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) remote sensing archaeological surveys of the entire Clapp Properties. In addition, conduct other archaeological explorations and documentations as required and permitted by and/or coordinated with the Massachusetts Historical Commission prior to any new ground disturbance associated with installing new accessible pathways, and lowering existing grade for site drainage purposes adjacent to the barn.

Explore Use of Gray Water. Explore possibilities of collecting and extracting gray water for lawn watering from rainwater collection and re-using old drinking water well(s).

HSR for Lemuel Clap House. Hire a consultant prepare a new Historic Structures Report (HSR) and Restoration Plan for the ca. 1710? / 1765 Lemuel Clap House.

Hazardous materials. Hire a consultant to identify and remove Hazardous Materials, including but not necessarily limited to asbestos, in and from the William Clapp House basement.

HVAC. Hire an HVAC engineer / consultant to redesign the existing hot air supply and return duct systems in the William Clapp House basement to be more invisible, and/or better coordinated with existing historic joists, beams and architecture.

Solar power. Hire a consultant or renewable energy expert to aid in the decision of whether to mount a solar panel system on the south slope of the barn to free the DHS from fossil fuel consumption and to introduce green renewable on site. Prepare a more detailed study of the cost and benefits associated with solar electric photo-voltaic (pv) cells and a new environmentally-friendly electric generating system.

Site model / Illustrations. Engage an architect and/or architectural illustrator to prepare a new accurate site model of approximately 2 feet x 2 feet size of the improved property, and a variety of architectural renderings of select features in the new design(s), to assist with fundraising purposes and building community support.

Extension of Services through Public Programs, Expansion, etc.

1. **Acquire additional historic properties** for preservation and/or easements on the same, over the next 20 years, including

S.K. Clapp House. The former S.K. Clapp House located adjacent to the Clapp properties on the north;

Three Decker. At least one (1) Dorchester three decker house across Boston Street from the Clapp Houses;

Collection Storage Facility. One above grade brick building, perhaps a renovated garage, to be used to accommodate a new fireproof and water proof archives and library;

Lecture Hall. Ownership or use of a school building, church, or similar facility to be used as a lecture hall/event space;

Land to the West. A 20 foot strip (more if possible) of the former Clapp property (current Verizon property) to the west.

2. **Develop new income streams** from rentals of new properties to hire a professional museum staff, to include at least one full-time Executive Director, one Curator / Librarian, and an Educational Programs Director.
3. **Develop more Clapp Orchards** on and adjacent to the existing Clapp properties.
4. **Strategically use celebrations** of 2009 as the Roger Clap 400th Birthday Year to begin to
 - Fund and complete a fuller restoration and adaptive re-use and upgrade of the Clapp family properties [i.e., implement this plan];
 - Expand educational programs involving local and regional colleges and school;
 - Expand and increase number of partnerships;
 - Shine new attention on Dorchester's historic significance, and the long term growth goals of the DHS;
 - Unveil a new trail of connected Clapp Family related historic sites;
 - Begin to develop a new Clapp Family Association to increase restoration and special event support resources;
 - Focus attention on a new C-LAP (Clapp family Lands Acquisition Project).