

9 November 1990

Joyce Ohlson, Planner
Town of Shelburne
Municipal Offices
Shelburne, VT 05482

RE: Visual Resources Inventory

Hi Joyce,

Finally...enclosed is the remaining work we discussed at our meeting during my visit in October:

P E T E R
M A R S H A L L
O W E N S

01. DESCRIPTIONS OF VIEWS. I've gone through and edited and reordered my field notes describing the inventoried views for consistency and geographical logic. These views are numerically keyed to both the mylar map and the photographs of the views. I think in entering these into your computer it will be easier to begin again rather than trying to edit the old list--the numbering has been pretty radically rearranged.

02. WATER VIEWS. I've gone through all the water photographs and selected what I judged to be the significant views, added them to the master list and numbered the photographs accordingly. As we discussed, I tried as best I could to delineate key open space and focal points for these views using the forest-field demarcations on the 1:24000 USGS map mosaic. Conceptually these areas become a little problematic to characterize. While they are, strictly speaking, part of the middle-ground. But since the foreground (open water) is so unrestricted and uniform, these open middle ground areas become more significant and vulnerable to degradation than middle ground areas from most of the land-based views. These areas thus deserve to be both distinguished on the map (I'd suggest using a solid green line rather than a dashed one) as a different type of middleground. You may be able to refine the zones further using the orthos and the photographs--good luck!

03. NUMBERED PHOTOGRAPHS. Once the numbering sequence was finalized, I went ahead and wrote the view number right on the photographs. This will make it much easier, especially for the panoramas, to quickly identify and piece together the actual views represented on the maps. As I told you before, there are a few views that didn't end up actually getting photographed. Because these viewpoints are numbered, mapped and described, shooting photographs of them should be relatively simple. We also discussed the desirability of shooting these views in other seasons as well. I've also enclosed all the negatives and extra photographs.

✓ 04. DESCRIPTION OF METHODOLOGY. This is what I fax'ed to you earlier. Please review, critique, comment and return and I can make any revisions necessary.

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OAKLAND CA, 94618
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✓ 05. MAPPING. How did the map look to you? Does the legend make sense? Have you figured out how you will digitize it? I put on a lot of "tick" marks so it should be easy to digitize in small pieces. I'm enclosing the "sharpie" markers I used on the map for your use. The water-based viewpoints and directional arrows are shown on the USGS in pencil and should be pretty easy to transfer to the acetate.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
URBAN DESIGN
ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING



84 CHARLOTTE STREET
BURLINGTON, VERMONT
802 862 8161 05401

Finally, I've also enclosed a custom (all though not yet patented) 1:5000 map scale ruler for your measuring pleasure--not available at newstands or stores! Its been a fun project--just wish I'd gotten it done before I left! I've enclosed an invoice. The budget was pretty good--it came out a few hundred dollars cheaper than I'd estimated in my proposal. Best of luck to you on finishing up the plan. This is my last breath before I descend into the end of term frenzy. Give my regards to Larry, Craig, Elaine and of course little Hannah. I'll be in Vermont the week after Christmas--hope to see you then. In the meantime let me know how everything looks and pray for early snow!

MA

10 October 90

Shelburne Visual Resources Inventory--PROJECT SUMMARY

OVERVIEW

The visual surroundings of any community is generally a key part of its sense of identity and heritage. This is particularly true in the Town of Shelburne. Set within a broad, mountain-framed valley at the edge of a great lake, its well-endowed landscape of rolling farms and woodlands is deeply important to its residents as a legacy of the past and a resource to be protected for future generations. The landscape embodies such commonly held community values as a desire for an open, rural environment, respect for natural and historic resources, and enjoyment of the outdoors.

INVENTORY METHODOLOGY

The first step in any resource protection plan is to inventory the resource in question. While assessment of landscape scenery can be a somewhat subjective undertaking, experience has shown a remarkable collective consensus emerges within communities as to what constitutes a significant visual or scenic resource. While there are many views that could arguably be classified as a "visual resource", this study focused on the most widely recognized ones--landscape views from public roads and significant vantage points.

The inventory process consisted of a consulting landscape architect and at least one town representative doing a comprehensive field survey of the town. Over the course of four days in the field, significant views along every public road as well as the entire length of the shoreline from the public waters of Lake Champlain were identified, described, and photographically documented. A total of almost 100 views, including many partial or full panoramas, were recorded.

In order to understand the scenery's spatial composition (that is the actual land area included in a particular scene), each view was broken into three distinct spatial components; foreground, middleground, and background. Focal points within each view were also identified. These terms were defined as follows:

FOREGROUND--is generally composed of open land adjacent to the road or other vantage point and framed by woodlands, hedgerows, or topographic relief. This area is usually the most critical view component because it is, in effect, the communities "window" to the larger view and is thus usually

highly vulnerable to degradation by development. Although usually comprising the largest area of the viewing field, it is always quite small and easily identified in actual ground area compared to the middleground and background.

MIDDLEGROUND--is usually a more complex composition of receding woodlands, fields, hillsides and focal points such as farm clusters or villages. Due to its much larger area, high percentage of wooded lands, distance from the viewer and diverse character, the middleground tends to be much less vulnerable to degradation from development. Exceptions would include development in an open field that is important as a visual focal point or development that would break the horizon line.

BACKGROUND--is composed of layers of distant hillsides and mountains that rise up behind the middle ground and enclose the view. While these areas are usually protected from development by virtue of their elevation and steep terrain, they are potentially subject to degradation by "skylined" development that breaks the horizon line. In Shelburne, due to its gently rolling terrain, the background to almost all views consists of lands beyond the town boundary--the hillsides of neighboring towns and the ridgeline of the Green Mountains to the east and the striking Adirondack Range across the lake in New York to the west.

FOCAL POINTS--are elements in a view that tend to draw or grab the eye because of their strong contrast and/or unique form. They can include prominent cultural features such as farmstead clusters or church steeples or distinct natural features such as mountain peaks, hilltops, great trees, or rock outcrops.

The inventory of photographed views was then reviewed by the members of the Conservation Commission. The most important views were prioritized by the group and others judged "not-significant" were thrown out. Using the field photographs, 1:5000 ortho-photo base maps and 1:24000 USGS topographic maps, the specific foreground of each view was mapped. Vantage points, direction of view, general middleground areas, and focal points were also mapped. All mapping was done at a 1:5000 scale and registered to the Vermont state coordinate grid system for GIS compatibility.