



# HISTORIC NEW ENGLAND

*Defining the past. Shaping the future.*

Lyman Estate  
185 Lyman Street  
Waltham, MA 02452-5645  
tel 781.891.4882  
fax 781.893.7832  
www.HistoricNewEngland.org

April 3, 2012

Hon. Board of Selectmen  
Town of Sudbury, Massachusetts  
278 Old Sudbury Road  
Sudbury, Mass. 01776

Selectmen:

On behalf of Historic New England and its more than 6500 members, I write in support of Sudbury's Community Preservation Committee's recommendation to purchase the development rights on the nearly 100 acres of Pantry Brook Farm. This important purchase would make an outstanding contribution to the preservation of the community's open space and agricultural character, but also to preserve the setting of a virtually-intact early nineteenth century farmstead.

The open space of the property retains its rural characteristics and consists primarily of open fields, gardens, granite fence posts, and stone walls. To have this combination of built features retained within an original agricultural and natural setting is increasingly rare and merits CPA support to secure its future condition.

Beyond the 100 acres of unspoiled farmland currently being considered for purchase there remains a significant complex of intact nineteenth century farm buildings. Overall, this farm complex documents a fast-disappearing aspect of New England's past. It is historically and architecturally significant, and worthy of preservation for both local and statewide significance. Constructed circa c.1820 and remodeled in the 1830s, the Pantry Brook Farmhouse retains much of its original character and represents vernacular Federal and Greek Revival style architecture in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. At the interior of the house many original architectural elements survive unaltered, including structural timber framing, woodwork, door and window hardware, plaster walls, and softwood floorboards. Of particular note is woodwork at the east parlor of the farmhouse that includes a fireplace mantel based on Plate 50 from Asher Benjamin's 1830 pattern book, *The Architect or Practical House Carpenter*. Constructed around the same time of the house, the attached sheds and barn are unaltered and characteristic examples of typical nineteenth century agricultural buildings.

In the future, Historic New England may have the opportunity to work with the current owners to negotiate an historic preservation easement on Pantry Brook Farm that would complement Sudbury's purchase of development rights on the open farmland. If pursued by the current owners, such a preservation easement would protect the historically and architecturally important

features of the property's buildings for their aesthetic value and as irreplaceable artifacts of the craftsmanship of nineteenth-century New England. Historic New England's easement program is one of the most comprehensive nationally – and protects the exterior, interior, and landscape element of those structures under its care. Having the surrounding land remain intact and perpetually protected through the purchase you contemplate would be highly important to Historic New England in potentially moving to secure this protection for the Pantry Brook Farm.

In sum, Pantry Brook Farm serves as a reminder of our collective agricultural past; a past that is too quickly disappearing or is otherwise being forgotten. Purchasing the development rights from this farm will be a significant accomplishment and preservation/conservation milestone for Sudbury, for Massachusetts and for the heritage of New England. Opportunities like this are not commonplace and should be pursued whenever possible; if missed, the loss will surely be lamented.

Historic New England applauds the Community Preservation Committee's recommendation, and encourages the Board of Selectmen to act favorably on the article presented. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'J. R. Phelps', written in dark ink.

Jess R. Phelps

Team Leader for Historic Preservation