

These features are the most important to preserve ...

- ◆ **the "iconic" view** of the farm: from Winchester Street over the field to the west wall of the barn, including the bottom bay doors, which are often open to the field, with people going in and out
- ◆ **spatial relationships** among buildings, and between buildings and landscape (bldgs on the edges, barn built into hillside, relative size of barn & house, house close to road)
- ◆ **barn:** in addition to west wall in the "iconic view," front and back ramps, wide front door, built into hillside, simple shape, functional/recycled windows, large interior space subdivided and adapted over the years
- ◆ **visible historical "layers" and recycling** in buildings, tools & furnishings: walls from different periods (dry stone vs. mortared, brick, concrete block); modernized "front" rooms vs. unremodeled "back" bedrooms in the farmhouse; improvised / recycled / adapted chicken coops, cold frames, barn tables, plows; wine press & shelves for home canning in farmhouse basement, ...
- ◆ **brick veneer** on the farmhouse, stone outdoor fireplace (most significant for Italian immigration)
- ◆ **mix of public & private** ("family") **uses** – they share the site, but are also clearly separated
- ◆ **permaculture or long-term crops**, not just annual ones: apple trees, grape vines, ...
- ◆ **visible signs of farm work** in progress: boxes, baskets, tools (and people!) in plain view, not tidied away

... because they each embody several (or all) of these significant themes in the farm's history:

Newton's community character

- ◆ **sense of place** Newton's development history was very different on the north side, where commuter villages grew up around railroad stations starting in the 1840s, & the south side, which had small farms and nurseries until after World War II
- ◆ **kids & community** community as a whole involved in educating/steering kids, not just teachers or parents; and this work was done everywhere, not just in classrooms (*overlaps with "connections & interdependence"*)

small-scale New England farming

- ◆ **plain, not fancy** farmers did not make a lot of money, bldgs and spaces designed for function rather than for display or status; small farms had their own beauty, but often appeared "messy" to nonfarmers!
- ◆ **stability & stewardship** land ownership "anchored" just 2 families to the site over most of the past 200 years (not an experience today's kids can expect to have!), Anginos were committed to sustainable & organic practices before those words were in widespread use
- ◆ **adaptability & ingenuity** change was incremental rather than wholesale, and was even sometimes reversed, farmers adapted & tinkered with everything (land, buildings, tools) to solve problems and meet new challenges, Mass. Electric [contractor, not power company] was started in barn workshop
- ◆ **connections & interdependence** like most small farms, not self-sufficient; since the mid-18th century, farmers always worked off-farm, had mixed sources of income, & bartered their labor; Jerry Angino knew the City as a whole, helped struggling families from all ethnic backgrounds (*overlaps with "kids & community"*)

local history as global history

- ◆ **changing journey of food, from farm to table** 200 years of change in who owned land (Yankees to newer immigrants), in what farmers earned, in which foods were grown & how, in how – & how far – food traveled to consumers, in how & why food was preserved (*overlaps with "connections & interdependence"*)
- ◆ **Italian immigration** regional connections from Italy helped people move here & get work, Italians gardened & farmed but also worked in factories & City government, their homes expressed their aspirations for stability, Anginos connected major Italian community in Nonantum with southern part of the City, family not only worked but also lived & ate outdoors [stone fireplace] (*overlaps with all themes above!*)

NOTES & QUESTIONS

- ◆ PARTICIPANTS in 14 May 08 drafting session:
 - *from Newton Farm Commission:* Vaunita Schnell and Donald Lang (*arrived for last 15 mins.*)
 - *from Newton Community Farm:* Peter Barrer, Ted Chapman, Becka Smillie, Lucy Caldwell Stair
 - *facilitator:* Alice Ingerson, Community Preservation Program Manager
- ◆ BARN WINDOWS: Why did barns historically have few or small windows?
 - a. Windows were expensive to install and maintain. Barns were mostly functional storage space for animals, feed, and equipment. People didn't spend much time there on a daily basis (unless they were milking in a dairy barn, or gathering eggs in a chicken barn – Angino barn was neither of these).
 - b. In the Angino barn, people spent more time in the basement bays, which were open to the field, and in the workshop, where they worked on electrical contracting (but probably used electric light - that was their business, after all!).

So ... how different should new windows be, since new windows may be less not have the same (a) problem as older windows, and new educational use changes conditions (b) and (c)? How important is it for the barn as a building to “teach” or “speak” to (c)?
- ◆ HEATING in the BARN: Should it be unobtrusive (so the barn still LOOKS unheated, even if it FEELS heated)? Or fully visible - to illustrate the idea that on a small farm, equipment wasn't always "tided away," and the work and tools were mostly out in plain sight?
- ◆ BRICK, IRON & VINYL: The iron railings on the farmhouse front porch may express the same sense of "permanence" as the brick veneer, but we thought the brick was the most significant expression of this. Vinyl siding may have been intended partly as "modernization," but we think it was installed mostly to reduce the maintenance burden, and makes less of "values statement" than the brick veneer, or even the iron railings.
- ◆ MANURE vs COMPOST: Manure was a significant element of the Angino farm. Is today's equivalent a compost pile, even though the Anginos did not compost? Animals were a significant element on the farm as well, and critical for sustainability.
- ◆ PROGRAMMING & EDUCATION should reinforce and interpret physical preservation. Some aspects of the farm's historic significance may be conveyed *better in this way than through physical preservation:*
 - Document the “mess,” recycle some things from it, then ... clean it up. But programming should try to include “tinkering” space, where kids can invent solutions to problems from recycled/spare parts, like Ernie Angino “inventing” Mass Electric in the barn workshop.

This theme also has an ecological education connection. When trying to explain the importance of preserving species and ecosystems for which people saw no immediate need, renowned conservationist Aldo Leopold wrote that “The first rule of intelligent tinkering is to keep every cog and wheel.”
 - Document the historical “layering” and “recycling” of materials, textures and spaces (lofts, workshops, stalls) in the barn; save or recycle as much as possible; but also try to echo this history of “layers” and “recycling” in any new designs or construction.
 - Use walls to tell stories - display and interpret photos, quotes, small tools.
 - Make and maintain connections with other parts of the city & other institutions.
 - Revive and complete the family & oral history video project first suggested in 2005 – while Angino family members, “Jerry's kids,” and others who remember the farm's pre-2004 history are still around to share their memories.

DETAILED DISCUSSION NOTES (2 pp.)

NEWTON'S COMMUNITY CHARACTER

A. sense of place

- The farm has a sense of beauty & grace, and evokes an earlier time. The buildings just "fit into" the landscape, they feel like they really belong.
- The farm's sense of place depends partly on the "rural feel" of its setting, on Nahanton and Winchester Streets, where most buildings are set well back from the road. In this part of Newton, farms were subdivided for development fairly late - mostly after World War II - because it did not have railroad stations and railroad commuters, and this part of the Charles River was not used to power mills, because it had no significant "falls." And by the time farms along these two streets were developed, different rules were in place that kept more open space, protected wetlands, increased setbacks, etc.

B. kids & community

- Jerry Angino did a lot of what today might be called "social work," "rehabilitation," or "education" with kids and their families, but he was not a stereotypical "liberal": he believed strongly in family, and in hard work as the best way to keep kids out of trouble. But "his" kids were very attached to him, as many who are now adults will tell you.
- Jerry's work with the schools, and with kids in general, illustrated closer, more flexible relationships between citizens and government in general, among government depts., and between the schools and the City than is the case today. Jerry even did "individualized districting" - he would suggest shifting kids to a different school if he thought that would help them. (The School Dept. once had coordinators whose jobs were simply to maintain equity among schools & districts, and keep north side connected to the south side, and vice versa)
- Kids who worked with Jerry knew their boundaries: in the farmhouse, for example, the 1st and 2nd floors were family space, kids worked only in the basement.

SMALL-SCALE NEW ENGLAND FARMING

C. plain, not fancy

- Historically, this farm was: functional, not fancy; "messy," not manicured; ramshackle & recycled. It was a working landscape, not an ornamental one (or at least not designed strictly for looking at - it was and is beautiful in its own way!). These farmers did most of their work in plain view - they didn't hide their tools and equipment "back stage." If it wasn't going to rain (or they weren't worried about theft), they didn't always "tidy up" tools and equipment that they would only have to haul back out to the same spot again the next day. ... although the farm looked neater when Jerry Angino was running it than it does now - it has more people and activities now (and more democratic decisionmaking?)
- In short, this farm represents a particular kind of New England farming: small-scale, mixed-income, entrepreneurial, and not highly profitable. The Angino family never had any money, at least until Mass Electric became a big business (but that was only one branch of the family).

D. stability & stewardship

- From the early 19th century to 2004, only 2 families occupied this land for almost 2 centuries (though it was rented for a decade-plus in between). They were committed and "anchored" to this place by owning land.
- Although not all 19th-century farming was organic, the Anginos' farming was.
- In some ways, the farm was managed sustainably before the City acquired it ash from woodstove used on fields, manure used on fields (though it came from elsewhere, including the big estates in the neighborhood, there was no on-site composting).

E. adaptability & ingenuity

- Small farmers had to be creative and entrepreneurial, solving problems with whatever they had or could make. And they couldn't be afraid of technology (maybe it wasn't an accident that Mass Electric, which became a major contracting company, was started in the barn's workshop.)

- We wondered if Ernest Angino, the company's founder, learned his skills through apprenticeship, or perhaps through the training program at Newton High School, which had a tradition there of 2nd and 3rd generation kids learning the same trade, following in their parents' (fathers'?) footsteps.
- Yet the farm also changed constantly, and illustrates many accumulated layers of history: from late 18th-century farmers and laborers, through 19th- and 20th-century Italian immigration, to post-WWII suburbs. It doesn't have a single "period of significance," they're all significant!
- Change has not always been one-way: an earlier generation installed and used radiators to heat the house, but Jerry Angino went back to heating only with the woodstove, on principle.

F. connections & interdependence

- The people who have farmed this site have probably combined farming with other kinds of work since the late 18th or early 19th century. They have worked as laborers on the large estates nearby, or as telephone operators, or for the City.
- The Angino family in particular had close ties to neighborhoods and people all over the City. The Anginos were active at the YMCA in Newton Corner and the Boys' and Girls' Club in Newtonville, and connected with Newton's best-known Italian community in Nonantum. Other City workers brought Jerry felled city trees to use as firewood. Jerry knew by 9 am every day who was, or wasn't in school, and he called on them at home to reinforce their parents' authority. From these housecalls, he also knew which families were struggling, and brought them food (turkey, produce) at holidays and other times. Jerry knew the City so well that he advised the Mayor on social "problem areas" so early action could head off bigger problems later.

LOCAL HISTORY AS GLOBAL HISTORY**G. changing journey of food, from farm to table**

- Life on the farm included not only growing food but preserving it: the basement of the farmhouse had LOTS of shelves for home-canned goods and preserves, and the barn had a root cellar.
- The Anginos sold flowers and especially tomatoes. But people really wanted Jerry's tomato plants. Food was mostly delivered, but some customers came to the farm, although there was no formal farmstand, and plants and produce were just displayed on outdoor tables or in the barn's basement bays.

H. Italian immigration

- Although the farm was "plain, not fancy" some things about it make strong statements about cultural values. The brick veneer on the house, for example, signifies the Angino family's commitment to the farm, and their sense of stability and prosperity. It was not just done to reduce the maintenance costs of the wood house, or for esthetics - it makes a moral or political statement about permanence.
- There was a small Italian community in Oak Hill by the late 19th century, but the Anginos also maintained connections with Newton's main Italian community in Nonantum, and Jerry helped families of all ethnic backgrounds.