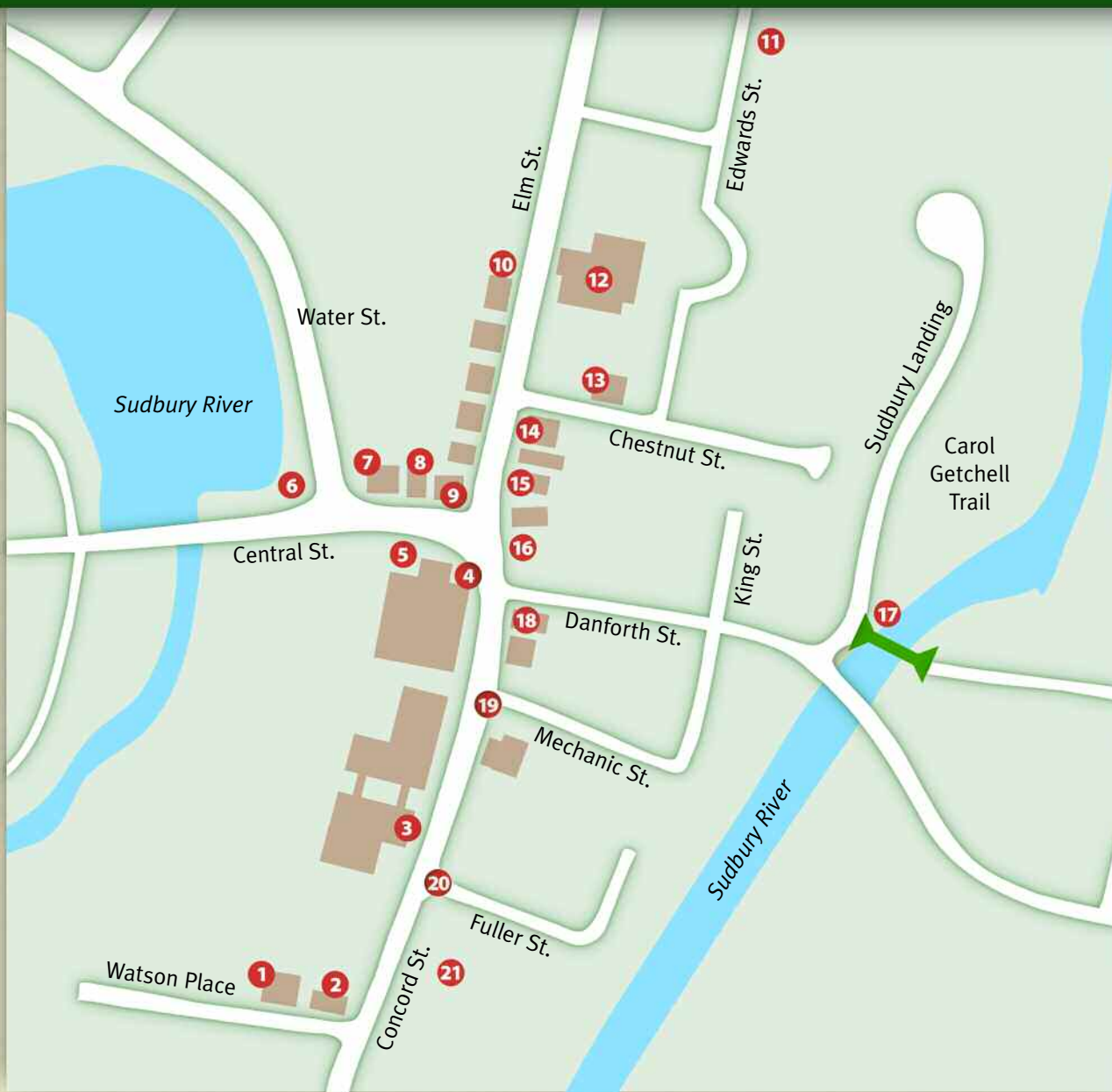


Saxonville Historic Walking Tour



LEGEND

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DATA SOURCES: Roads and Buildings from Boston Edison at 1:5,000. Hydrography from MassGIS at 1:25,000



Saxonville Fire Station (1902)
"High Victorian Eclectic" design currently housing Engine 2 of the Framingham Fire Department. It was built when canvas hoses had to be hung in a drying tower after each fire. The only other such tower in Framingham is at the old Hollis Street Fire Station, which is now a community arts center.



Athenaeum Hall (1847)
First called the Saxonville Town Hall, this building has served as a school, meeting hall, jail, veterans post and hospital over the years. Recent renovations by the Friends of Saxonville will preserve the building for future generations.



Saxonville Mills Building #7 (1850)
This is the oldest building in the complex, and the only mill building to survive the great fire of 1883. A railroad spur used to go right inside this building.



McGrath Square
Named for James J. McGrath, a Saxonville lad killed in World War I while trying to save the lives of his fellow soldiers. The square was once the site of the town pump, the only water source for the entire neighborhood before indoor plumbing.



Saxonville Mills Main Tower (1884)
The towers reflect the "Second Empire" or French Mansard design that was the fashion at the time. The bell inside set the routine for village life in Saxonville for many years. The bell used in the original mill complex was cast by the Paul Revere foundry, but melted in the great fire. Framingham Historical Society and Museum has a piece of the original bell on display.



Saxonville Falls and Dam (1865)
The water power at these falls has been used to drive mill wheels since 1659 when John Stone built a grist mill here. The transition to steam power began in the late 19th century.



Liberty Apartments, 11-13 Central St. (1823)
Typical multi-dwelling housing for mill workers. Dates back to the earliest textile mills of the 1820s. Before its name was changed to McGrath Square, this area was called Liberty Square.



7-9 Central Street (c. 1880)
Once of the many commercial and private Saxonville buildings either built or remodeled in the Second Empire style. This building was moved in the 1980s to center it between its neighbors. The old Saxonville fire station was once located to its left. The fire station being directly across the street from the mill when it burned down in 1883 did not seem to help.



Mill Store Block, 1-5 Central St. (c. 1830)
Significantly remodeled in the Second Empire style in about 1880.



Site of Michael Simpson's 'Cottage,' 50 Elm Street
Simpson took over the Saxonville Mills in 1859. He lived in a mansion on this site that he called his 'cottage.' From this hill he could survey hundreds of acres that he owned. Prior to this, the area was the site of a Native American village. Simpson died in 1884 and the mansion lasted until the 1930s.



Edwards Church (1827) and Cemetery (1838)
Framingham's second oldest church was built just one year after the First Baptist Church at Framingham Center. First built as the Saxonville Meeting House for use by various denominations, it was soon taken over by the Congregationalists. The cemetery is owned and managed by the town. Conrad Homan, Civil War Medal of Honor hero, is buried here.



Stapleton School (1922)
This elementary school replaced a wooden school that was on this site since the 1850s. The older building served as the Saxonville High School until the 1890s. It is now named after Mary Stapleton, long-time Framingham teacher, principal and School Committee member.



Old Methodist Church (1880)
The Methodist Church in Framingham goes back to the 1790s. This church once had a tall steeple, but it was lost during a hurricane in 1938. Since the Methodists built their modern church on Water Street, this church has been used by Baptists, and is now a Taiwanese church.



Old Edwards Chapel (1871)
Built by the Edwards Church as a social hall, it was converted to commercial use in 1961.



Turnpike Rug (c. 1877)
Another Second Empire commercial building. Turnpike Rug was so named because the business was originally located on the Worcester Turnpike.



Site of Fuller's Store
Luther Fuller was the Saxonville Postmaster and served as Framingham's State Representative for many years. His general store and post office no longer stand, but his name is remembered in Fuller Street, just down the road.



Old Danforth Street Bridge (c. 1890)
Danforth Street is still lined with worker housing from the 1870s and leads to an iron bridge and Danforth Park. The old bridge is a rare example of a Pratt Pony Truss structure. Beyond this, on top of the hill at Danforth Park, was once located a Native American fort. The street and the park were named for Samuel Danforth, a 19th century builder, not Thomas Danforth, originally Framingham's largest land owner.



Parking lot at Danforth and Concord Street - Site of the Simpson Block
A wooden, three story commercial building on this corner housed Saxonville's first library, called the Simpson Reading Room. In the 1920s it was the scene of a small riot by striking textile workers.



Mechanic Street
Named long before auto mechanics, this street housed carriage makers and other craftsmen.



Fuller Street
Named to honor Luther Fuller this street was originally named Church Street because the Methodist Church was located at the end. The name had to be changed when Saxonville was incorporated into Framingham, because there was already a Church Street in Framingham.



Saxonville Village Apartments - Saxonville Train Station
It would not be surprising if these apartments are also sitting on the place where John Stone, Saxonville's first European resident, originally brought his family when he built at Otter Neck. In 1846 it became the site of the rail yards and station of the Saxonville Branch Railroad, which went to Natick Center. When these apartments were built, the excavation was interrupted by the discovery of the old locomotive turntable. If you continue further down Concord Street, past the Patrick McDonald House, to the bridge over the Sudbury River, you can see the old railroad bridge abutment to the right.