

Sawdust and Strata

Historic Preservation Specialists and Museum Consultants



Report

For the planning of a historical loop trail in the Newington Junction section
and recommendations on different methodologies for preservation of historic resources

Client

Town of Newington, CT

June 3, 2022

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Executive Summary

This report was prepared for the Town of Newington to serve as a preservation planning document for the Newington Junction Historic Loop Trail. It outlines:

- Contributing historic properties;
- Proposes interpretive panels with QR codes for additional content, including audio tours, district maps and photographs;
- Presents generalized content for each panel;
- The use of historic information compiled during the implementation phase for integration with the Town of Newington's education curriculum.

The Town of Newington currently does not have infrastructure for the preservation or identification of historic resources. Recommendations for the town address several methods to implement an inventory of existing resources, both known and unknown, among which are:

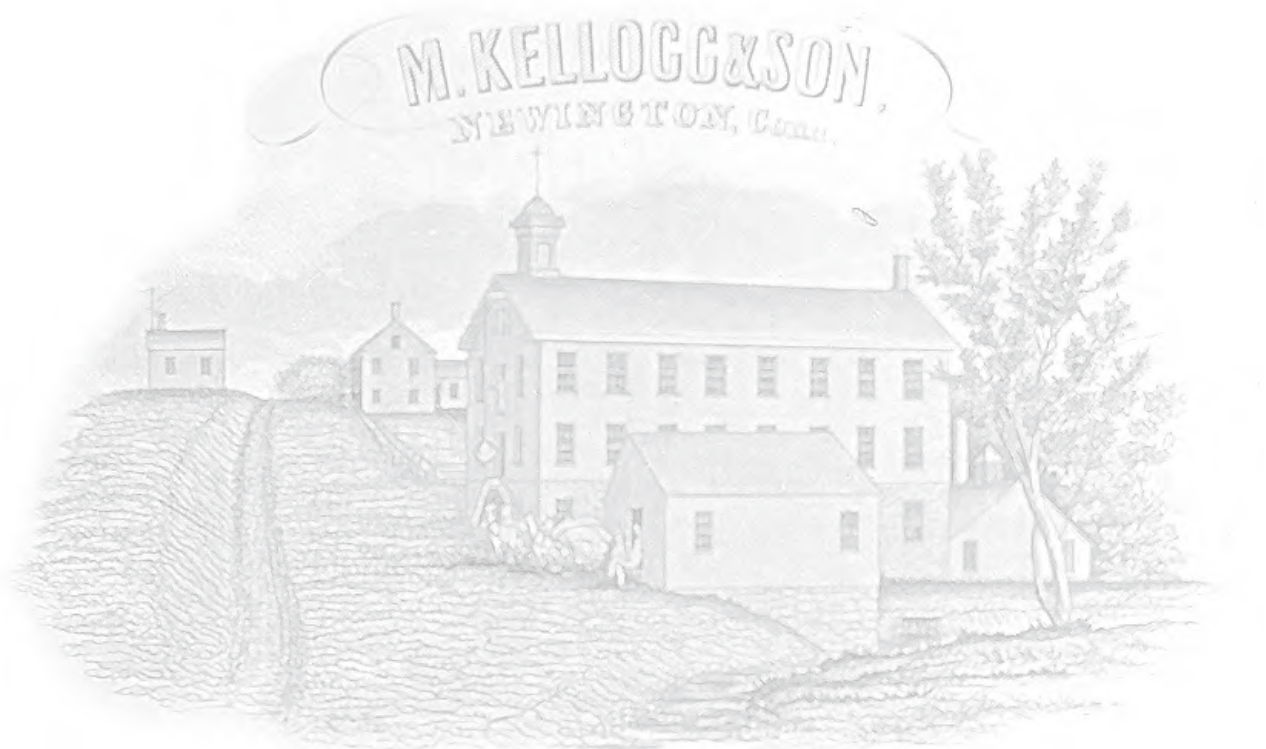
- The creation of historic resource inventories, cultural resource maps, archaeological sensitivity maps, and an official Newington Junction Historic District map;
- Creating a preservation plan for later incorporation into the POCD;
- Considering the local designation of municipally owned historic structures such as the Kellogg-Eddy House and Center Cemetery;
- If local designation of municipal properties is completed, the Town could apply for Certified Local Government status which would make additional grants available and increase the amounts available on some State Historic Preservation Grants.

All the work proposed in this report could be supported by or paid for through various grants.

Introduction

This report is being submitted to fulfill the RFP published by the Town of Newington in March 2022. The SHARP grant awarded to the Town of Newington was meant to allow the town to hire a consultant to help with planning a historical loop trail in the National Register District of Newington Junction. The RFP stated that the consultant needed to:

- Assess existing historical properties and/or structures in Newington Junction and identify any new candidates based on architectural style and date of construction;
- Conduct a land-use history to review the development of the area;
- Assess significant historical, cultural and environmental themes and how they relate to the themes at the local, regional, state or national levels;
- Develop a historical narrative which will inform and provide interpretive content that will be accessible and pertinent to a diverse population;
- Recommend how to maximize assets that will encourage and inform the public to visit the target area;
- Discuss incentives and financial resources that may encourage historic property owners to invest and maintain the historic property;
- Provide information on other communities and the methods in which the Town of Newington have maximized their historic resources.



I. Newington Junction and Historic Loop Trail

Historical Development of Newington Junction



Late 19th century photograph of 282 Willard Street. Courtesy of Newington Historical Society and Trust.

Although the first parcels of land were distributed by the Wethersfield land grants in 1670, the area that would become Newington Junction was not settled until 1697. By that time, today's Willard Avenue had been laid out along the eastern border of the original 52-acre long lot land grants. Three of these long lots were purchased by Samuel Hun, a man who is credited as being the first resident of the Newington Junction area. Hun established his farm and¹ agriculture would remain the predominate land use well into the 1900s.²

By the early 18th century, Hun had been joined by several other families, including the Willards and Camps.³ Newington was growing and with it, the understanding that it was beginning to be a distinct area of Wethersfield; residents of the area were far from downtown Wethersfield and weekly trips to attend services were long and arduous. By 1712, it was clear that Newington required its own meetinghouse – a building which fulfilled both civic and religious needs. That

year, Simon Willard and John Camp, along with several other men from the area, petitioned the Town of Wethersfield to create the West Society of Wethersfield. The charter was granted the following year. Within five years, West Society had changed its name to the Newington Society.⁴ The establishment of a meetinghouse was a slow process. Newington was officially recognized as a Parish by the General Assembly in 1721.⁵ It was not until 1722, however, that the first minister, Reverend Elisha Williams, was invited to serve the community.⁶

The population of Newington Society continued to grow over the course of the 18th century. Schools had to be established and additional highways built. However, it was not until the middle of the subsequent century that Newington really began to build a distinct identity from surrounding parishes and towns.⁷ In 1838, General Martin Kellogg, Daniel Willard III, and John M. Belden built a \$12,000 satinet⁸ factory on the south side of Piper Brook.⁹



282 Willard Avenue as seen in March 2022. Photograph taken by Daryn Reyman-Lock.

With the construction of the Hartford-New Haven Railroad in 1839 and additional tracks serving the Bristol-Hartford Railroad lines laid in 1850, a new junction was created at the southwestern intersection of West Hill Road and Willard Avenue. Two depots served the new

¹ George E. Andrews, *National Register of Historic Places*, Historic Resources of Newington Junction, Newington, Hartford County, Connecticut.

² James Hammond Trumbull, *The Memorial History of Hartford County, Connecticut, 1633-1884* (Boston, MA: Edward L. Osgood, 1886), 331.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Barbara J. Mathews, "The Welles Family and the Establishment of Newington." *Wethersfield Historical Society*, Wethersfield Historical Society, May 6, 2022 <https://www.wethersfieldhistory.org/articles/the-welles-family-and-the-establishment-of-newington/>.

⁵ "Connecticut Towns in the Order of Their Establishment." *State of Connecticut*, State of Connecticut, May 6, 2022, <https://portal.ct.gov/SOTS/Register-Manual/Section-VII/Connecticut-Towns-in-the-Order-of-their-Establishment>

⁶ "Our History," *Church of Christ Congregational*, Church of Christ Congregational, May 6, 2022, <https://newingtonucc.org/our-history/>.

⁷ George E. Andrews, *National Register of Historic Places*, Historic Resources of Newington Junction, Newington, Hartford County, Connecticut.

⁸ A finely woven cotton fabric with a finish resembling that of satin.

⁹ James Hammond Trumbull, *The Memorial History of Hartford County, Connecticut, 1633-1884* (Boston, MA: Edward L. Osgood, 1886), 331.



John Camp's General Store, no date. Courtesy of Newington Historical Society and Trust

railroads, and the area was termed “Newington Junction.”¹⁰ The advent of the railroad brought commercial prosperity to Newington as a whole, with specific impacts to the Junction area itself. The satinet factory grew. Over 40,000 yards of satinet were shipped by freight with over 13 trains stopping daily at the Junction to transport goods, mail and people to/from the area. Joseph Camp's small general store no longer could meet demand from its small rooms in the Camp House on Willard Street; a new commercial location near the railroad station was purchased and the shop moved there. In 1874, Grace Episcopal Church was established and nine years later, Fish's general store opened.¹¹

By the time the Civil War broke out, Newington became the fastest growing part of Wethersfield. The satinet factory was one of the principal producers of material used to line military uniforms, but the Willard Avenue bridge was not strong enough to continue to support carting of the heavy fabric to the railroad and meet the demands of pedestrians. It needed to be improved.¹² Residents of Newington petitioned the Town of Wethersfield for money to fix the bridge, but the town refused to allocate funds. Sentiment for separation from Wethersfield grew and representatives from Newington petitioned the General Assembly for incorporation, which was granted in 1871.¹³

The prosperity and activity witnessed in the mid-19th century would not last long. By 1900, the commercial fortune of Newington Junction had turned: the satinet factory had burned in 1890 and was not reestablished; trolley lines impacted railroad traffic which prompted railroad companies to install an electrified third rail in order to compete with other services to Hartford and New Britain; automobiles allowed people to commute individually rather than relying on mass transit. With these changes, Newington and Newington Junction became viewed as suburbs of Hartford, albeit an attractive one. As people moved to the area to have the benefits of suburban life with the advantages of urban wages, large swaths of land which had lain undeveloped between the village and Newington Junction were subdivided for housing. The distinction between the town and Newington Junction disappeared.¹⁴



19th century photograph of Newington Junction train depot and railroad lines. Courtesy of Newington Historical Society and Trust

The population of Newington continued to increase rapidly. By the mid-20th century, town meetings were no longer an adequate method of municipal government. Consequently, the current Council-Manager form of government was adopted.

¹⁰ George E. Andrews, *National Register of Historic Places, Historic Resources of Newington Junction*, Newington, Hartford County, Connecticut.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Elizabeth Baxter, *The Centennial History of Newington, Connecticut, 1971* (Newington, CT: Lucy Robbins Wells Library, 1971), 125.

¹³ Henry Stiles, *The History of Ancient Wethersfield, Connecticut Comprising the Present Towns of Wethersfield, Rock Hill, and Newington, and of Glastonbury Prior to Its Incorporation in 1693, from Date of Earliest Settlement Until the Present Time* (New York: Grafton Press, 1904), 830-832.

¹⁴ George E. Andrews, *National Register of Historic Places, Historic Resources of Newington Junction*, Newington, Hartford County, Connecticut.

Table 1. Existing Resources in the Newington Junction National Historic District

Note: Resources listed in red are municipally owned properties

2 Chapman Street	1922	64-66 Willard Avenue	c. 1925
4 Chapman Street	c. 1860	74 Willard Avenue	1904
4 Chapman Street	c. 1915	74 Willard Avenue	c. 1925
200 Francis Avenue		79 Willard Avenue	1914
269 West Hill Road	1904	79 Willard Avenue	c. 1925
269 West Hill Road	c. 1930	82 Willard Avenue	1860
272 West Hill Road	c. 1770	82 Willard Avenue	c. 1925
272 West Hill Road	c. 1840	91 Willard Avenue	1958
275 West Hill Road	1899	96-98 Willard Avenue	
275 West Hill Road	c. 1890	97 Willard Avenue	1894
279 West Hill Road	1953	108 Willard Avenue	1896
285-287 West Hill Road	1913	160 Willard Avenue	
285-287 West Hill Road	1913	268 Willard Avenue	1879
295-297 West Hill Road	1880	272 Willard Avenue	1951
295-297 West Hill Road	c. 1960	277 Willard Avenue	1899
301-303 West Hill Road	c. 1710	282-284 Willard Avenue	1852
301-303 West Hill Road	c. 1955	282-284 Willard Avenue	c. 1970?
Railroad Right of Way, between 160 Willard Avenue and 200 Francis Avenue		282-284 Willard Avenue	c. 1970?
55 Willard Avenue	1914	293 Willard Avenue	1874
55 Willard Avenue	c. 1925	294 Willard Avenue	c. 1870
56 Willard Avenue	1906	303 Willard Avenue	
56 Willard Avenue	post-1940	313 Willard Avenue	1915
63 Willard Avenue	1958	313 Willard Avenue	c. 1915
**Willard Ave lot owned by CL&P, between 1963-1979		319 Willard Avenue	c. 1725/1800
64-66 Willard Avenue	1899	372 Willard Avenue	

**NOTE: 255 West Hill Road is the property immediately adjacent to the historic district. It is town owned, but not within the district. It would be an optimal position to place an interpretive sign.

Recommendations for a Newington Junction Historic Loop Trail

Interpretive panels

The Newington Junction Historic District is not well signed and currently has no wayfinding. While some towns adopt signage to mark the entering of a historic district, Newington has a unique opportunity to create outdoor interpretive signage and trail signs to introduce the district and educate the public.

While the curation of the actual content is beyond the scope of this report, the Town of Newington should consider the placement of at least five interpretive panels – two at the Fast Track, one on the lot of 2 Chapman Street, one at 294 Willard Avenue and one at 255 West Hill Road. It should be noted that while 255 is outside of the Historic District, the western property line abuts the historic district; this property could provide a good setting to introduce the district. All four of these properties are town owned.

It should be noted that while this report provides an idea of content for each panel, during the implementation phase information would need to be researched which may include deed research for houses, basic biographical research for past homeowners and local persons of interest. All signage would use historic maps and evocative imagery (historic and photographic) to add further visual content and additional information to elaborate on the stories discussed on each of the interpretive signs. Signs would ideally highlight:

- Diversity, equality, accessibility and inclusion (DEAI);
- Contain a QR code which would allow access to an audio and/or walking tour, additional content and/or municipal websites

Signs at the FastTrack could be accompanied by a brochure that interested parties could take which showcases a map with the historical trail plus numbered attractions with a key.

In order to incorporate residents, the Town of Newington, in conjunction with the Library and Historical Society, may want to consider hosting a “discovery” period. During this period, locals and descendants of important residents and past homeowners could share stories, documents, pictures, etc. which would further enhance the content accessible on interpretive panels and via the website.

The signs could be launched alongside a parallel, temporary exhibit at the Historical Society or within the Firehouse at 2 Chapman Street if it can be secured as an exhibition venue for a short period of time.



Newington Junction train depot, c. 1900. Courtesy of Newington Historical Society and Trust

All signage would be designed with consideration of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Universally Designed Learning (UDL) principals.

FastTrack

This sign would be an introduction to the historic Newington Junction area, with a discussion of the bridge which started the process of Newington’s incorporation and the installation of the railway in the 1850s. A sidebar could offer information on the trolley system which was in use between 1894 and 1937 and connected Newington to Hartford and New Britain.¹⁵ This panel could have a QR code which would allow users access to

¹⁵ Elizabeth Baxter. *The Centennial History of Newington, Connecticut, 1971* (Newington, CT: Lucy Robbins Wells Library, 1971), 185.



Newington Junction train depot as seen in March 2022.
Photograph taken by Daryn Reyman-Lock.

extra content including directing them to the website, and an audio tour of the historic district complete with walking map and extra content.

A second sign for the FastTrack should be located near the depot building and could discuss in more depth the construction of the railroad, its local importance and effects on transportation and industry, as well as specific information on the workers – many of whom were immigrants and migrant builders. In doing so, the panel would help situate Newington's history in the national DEAI discussion.

2 Chapman Street

The interpretive signage installed on this property could introduce the firehouse and the choice of its placement. Discussions of the institution of a local Hose Company, the early first responders and continued importance of vernacular small structures such as this building would be easy topics to cover. The panel could also have a side bar that discusses 4 Chapman Street and briefly relays its history and association with Arsenic and Old Lace. A QR code could be put on the panel to allow people to access the full



2 Chapman Street as seen in March 2022. Photograph taken by Daryn Reyman-Lock.

story of 4 Chapman or additional content on early firehouses in town and the institution of the fire brigades nationally.

Photographic content can also be uploaded in addition to what is used on the panel.

The curation of this panel does offer an opportunity to work with the Newington Volunteer Fire Department, who maintains a fire museum in the original Fire House #1. They would be a source of information, records and photographs and it would be an opportunity to engage first responders in the town.

294 Willard Street

This building was built c. 1850 as a one-room schoolhouse. For this panel, emphasis should be placed on the development of this side of the bridge with a focus on the vernacular, Italianate and Queen Anne houses that are viewable from this property. The discussion of the need for a neighborhood school would fit within this context since as this neighborhood developed, the existing schoolhouse (which used to sit next door) became overtaxed and overcrowded, necessitating the need for a new one. A sidebar could address the schoolhouse itself or, if preferred, a smaller sign placed near or on the building itself. A QR code could link to additional content on the houses in the area. The audio tour would convey and elaborate on the story told on the signage.



Firehouse at 2 Chapman Street, c. 1970. Courtesy of Newington Historical Society and Trust



The two schoolhouses on Willard Street as they were in the mid-to-late 19th century. The school building to the left is now the VFW, while the school to the right was demolished. Courtesy of Newington Historical Society and Trust.

255 West Hill Road

****NOTE:** 255 West Hill Road is the property immediately adjacent to the historic district. It is town owned, but not within the district. It would be an optimal position to place an interpretive sign.

This property itself is not historic, the sign on the property could be oriented toward the historic streetscape intact across the road and discuss the development in the area from the Colonial Period through mid-20th century. The buildings on this street tell an incredible story architecturally and present styles from a wide range of periods in American History, each of which are indicative of style, taste, social status and norms and the associated changing necessities of daily life. This street is ripe with information for an audio tour and, with some more specific research, holds potential for a discussion of the lesser discussed populations present in Newington including enslaved peoples, farm laborers, industrial workers, and immigrants. While some of this content should be curated for inclusion on the panel itself, additional information should be available in the audio tour, by QR code and on the town's website alongside scans or photographs of primary source material, photographs, paintings, etc. Additional content could be developed concurrently or in subsequent phases for farms and dairies since at least one of these homes was likely a farmhouse.

Additional Signage

The Town of Newington may want to consider wayfinding signage that can be posted to help people follow the trail without the use of a phone or map. The signs could be simple and read "Newington Junction Historic Trail" with an arrow to indicate direction.

Education

As assembly of this report progressed, it became clear that the Newington school system revises curriculum every three to five years. Rather than considering the current curriculum, the core standards were used to compile this section. Specific emphasis was placed on elementary grade levels kindergarten through Grade 3. During these years, students are required to:

- Consider daily activity and how it changed over time (Colonial Period to Present Day);
- Learn about significant local people and places, the way they shaped the development of Newington and their outlooks on local and national socio-political events;
- Think about the changing perspectives on topics such as civics, social equality, and economics over time;
- Understand how historic sources can be used to learn about past occurrences and social structures;
- Learn about the use of natural resources, their impact on settlement and industry, and the manner in which people interact with the natural landscape.

This report outlines several ways in which the Town of Newington could maximize the preservation and use of their historic resources. It should be stated that the protection of said resources could also be used to support and bolster the core standards outlined above by emphasizing place-based education and through use of both active and passive learning techniques. The information assembled for this report and, more pointedly the interpretive signage and walking tour, would allow the development of educational tools such as travelling exhibitions, digital resources (e.g. interactive maps and reconstructions of Newington's historic landscapes), and games as well as present additional opportunities for field trips to engage students and enhance the student-centered learning process.

The specific standards for each grade, is available here:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1zh5ZDhoxanuDqH6J83w7LGZcAby6_oajNUdX4jbbi3k/edit?usp=sharing

II. Preservation, Public Awareness and Education

One of the largest problems encountered by preservationists is the lack of understanding surrounding typical preservation methods and designations. As a result, in order to properly launch preservation campaigns and/or highlight awareness of historic resources both listed and unlisted, it is important to provide residents, homeowners and local employees with information, definitions and resources. This can be done in a number of ways including via a portion of the town website devoted to historic resources; flyers sent directly to historic homeowners; pamphlets or information accessible at the town Planning and Building offices, Historic Society and Library; programming.

It is acknowledged that since the term “preservation” often is accompanied by an idea that activities will be restricted and incur additional costs, it would be wise to host a public information session at Town Hall early in the preservation planning process in order to educate homeowners and the general public on what “designation” actually means. It is also recommended that descriptions of the designations be posted on the Town’s website. See below for some ideas regarding wording and public programming avenues.

Website and Social Media

It is important to clarify the meaning of the different designations for the public. It would help decrease misconceptions of restrictions, impacts on property value and additional expenses. I would recommend the town publicize the below to help educate the local residents.

National Register

National Register Historic District or National Register Property designations places no restrictions on what an owner can and cannot do to his/her property. The property can still be altered and/or demolished. However, National Register status does entitle homeowners to use the Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program which can supply up to 30% back on hard costs of construction on projects ranging between \$15,000 and \$30,000 that seek to restore or rehabilitate historic resources listed on the National Register. Many projects are included within the scope of this program including, HVAC, electrical and plumbing concerns, repainting, re-roofing, lead abatement and floor restoration, etc. What should also be remembered is that homeowners can use this program multiple times for multiple projects but cannot do so concurrently (one project utilizing the Tax Credit Program has to be finished and the application closed before another can be opened). For more information, including eligible and ineligible expenditures, see this website: https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Historic-Preservation/02_Review_Funding_Opportunities/Tax-Credits/Historic-Homes-Rehabilitation-Tax-Credit

The only protection for historic resources offered under National Register status is protection from “unreasonable destruction” under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act (CEPA). These are expensive cases that involve the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and, if pursued, the Attorney General. But, the SHPO works with parties to find alternatives to destruction.

Table 2. Other resources on the National and State Register

General Martin Kellogg House, Kellogg-Eddy House	679 Willard Avenue
Enoch Kelsey House	1702 Main Street
Unni Robbins II House	1692 Main Street
Willard Homestead	372 Willard Avenue, individually listed as well as in district
Cedar Hill Cemetery	453 Fairfield Avenue

State Register

Like National Register designations, State Register designations are not restrictive. Homeowners are free to alter properties as they desire. However, listed properties are eligible for the Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program discussed above. There are no protections for listed properties under CEPA.

Local Historic Districts and Properties

If a property is listed within a *local* historic district or as a *local* historic property, it is subject to design review as laid out by the Connecticut State Statutes, Chapter 97a, section 7-147. Any exterior modifications, new construction or demolition of properties listed as local historic districts or properties would need to apply for approval to an appointed municipal board – the Historic District Commission (HDC). This is the strictest form of preservation available, however, only alterations that are viewable from a public way, street or place are eligible for review. Alterations, modifications, building or demolitions not viewable from a public way, street or place do not need to seek approvals from the HDC via an application process, nor does replacement in-kind (i.e. a structure with an asphalt roof is going to be re-roofed with an asphalt roof), paint color or landscaping. Individual HDCs would adopt manuals which would govern regulated and non-regulated activities within the town and supply residents of local historic districts and properties with a clear understanding of what is regulated under the Connecticut General Statutes and priorities of the local HDC.

As local historic districts and properties may concurrently be placed on the State

**TOWN OF WETHERSFIELD
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**
Application for
CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

OFFICE USE ONLY **OFFICE USE ONLY**

Application No. _____ Date Received _____

Application is hereby made for the issuance of a CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS for proposed work, as described below and as shown on photographs and plans or drawings.

Address of Proposed Work _____

Applicant _____ Phone _____
Applicant's Street _____ Email REQUIRED _____
City, State & Zip _____

Owner _____ Phone _____
Owner's Street _____ Email REQUIRED _____
City, State & Zip _____

Agent or Cemetery _____ Phone _____
Street _____ Email REQUIRED _____
City, State & Zip _____

APPLICATION FEE: \$75.00

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MAY BE REQUIRED (Please attach drafts):
Photographs/Manual Cut Sheets _____ Plot Plan of Property _____ Plans/Drawings of proposed work _____

EXPLANATION OF APPLICATION: _____

Signature of Applicant

OFFICE USE ONLY **OFFICE USE ONLY**

☐ Referred to Historic District Commission for Public Hearing On _____
☐ Notice of Public Hearing published on _____

COMMISSION ACTION

☐ Application TABLED ☐ Application APPROVED AS SUBMITTED
☐ Application DENIED ☐ Application APPROVED AS MODIFIED
☐ Application CONTINUED WITH HEARING LEFT OPEN ☐ Application APPROVED WITH STIPULATIONS

Date _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Signed _____
Clerk, Historic District Commission Clerk, Historic District Commission

Certificate of Appropriateness Application for the Town of Wethersfield.

Register during the process of local designation, resources with local designations may be eligible for the Historic Home Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program.

For more information or to view the Connecticut General Statutes for Historic Districts and Historic Properties, see this link:

https://www.cga.ct.gov/current/pub/chap_097a.htm

Historic Resources Inventories

Historic Resource Inventories have no incentives, restrictions or protective capabilities for homeowners. They are strictly a survey of resources within a municipality or locale that may have historic significance relating to social movements, people of importance, development or are great examples of particular architectural styles or examples of particular architects.

Homeowner Resources

For information on the Historic Homes Rehabilitation Tax Credit, including eligible and ineligible expenditures, see this website:

https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Historic-Preservation/02_Review_Funding_Opportunities/Tax-Credits/Historic-Homes-Rehabilitation-Tax-Credit

Content Linked from Interpretive Signage

Programming

Public programs can be provided for public information. The easiest and perhaps first that could be scheduled are lectures or information sessions devoted to what the State and National Register do and do not do. It is important for homeowners to understand that these programs are not restrictive and can come with valuable financial incentives that can make historic homeownership easier or more fiscally possible. These can be shared responsibilities among the Town, Historical Society and Library.

Additional lectures and information sessions could include:

- Rehabilitation and restoration
- Decoding historic architecture
- Researching the history of a house
- Histories tied to specific points of interest along with a tour of the property of interest (these could include historic cemeteries and people of interest interred locally)
- Historic plaque program run by the Historical Society and highlighted on the Town website in a “House of the Month” setting
- Why historic houses are more green/sustainable than new construction

These programs do not need to be taxing; they can be offered at nights, on weekends or on a lunch break and offered in-person or via web conference. They can be filmed and placed on a website for future reference. Likewise, they could be turned into a blog by the historical society or library for another way to access information provided. Some of this programming and its associated initiatives (e.g. blogs, websites, marketing), could be used for senior projects and internships for High School students.

Another program that could be offered is specifically for real estate agents and agencies. Real Estate agents do not always understand State or National designations or what an HRI survey is. It is always good to work alongside them in order to help maintain and preserve a sense of community and the historic character/local points of interest that brings people to town. Marketing of historic properties can doom a building to demolition or highlight it as a place of significance historically. By educating real estate agents and providing flyers or verbiage for them to include in marketing or closing documents about historic properties, it may make all the difference in the preservation and interest of local historic or antique homes. This can be done by the town or run collaboratively with the Historical Society and Library. Collaboration with other organizations is always a positive experience when it comes to preservation in terms of heightening awareness and expanding a network.

Plaque Program with Historical Society

Plaque programs are a good way to engage the community and gauge interest in history. While plaque programs in many towns are offered through the historical society, the Town of Newington could work in tandem with the Historical Society and highlight a “historic property of the month” on the website. Initially, homeowners would have to be notified of the availability of the program through mailers, flyers posted in Town Hall, the Historical Society, Libraries and notice boards online and in person. As the program becomes more widely known, other ways of inciting interest could be award ceremonies or plaque “presentations.”

Plaque reports should include deed research and biographical information about past owners, as well as a brief description of architecture that is original to the house, indicative of specific date or style, and/or indicative of expansion or addition. Many historical societies establish eligibility criteria, but these criteria vary widely. Some institutions state that a house must be 100 years old or more, have good integrity (are not completely renovated and show historic character), etc. Plaques can be designed and awarded to the homeowner for placement on the property.

It should be noted and made widely known that plaque programs are nonrestrictive and satisfy only homeowner curiosity and pride in their property.



268 Willard Avenue as seen at the turn of the century (left) and present (right). Historic photograph courtesy of Newington Historical Society and Trust. Modern photograph taken by Daryn Reymann-Lock, 2022.

III. General Municipal Recommendations

Preservation Plan

No historic preservation plan exists for the Town of Newington. This is a document which should be compiled and demonstrates the municipality's commitment to preserving its history and heritage, character of the town and its various neighborhoods and outlines the top objectives and motivations of the town about its historic and archaeological resources. According to Chris Skelly of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, "a preservation plan offers a comprehensive review of existing preservation conditions and a proactive, collaborative approach to protecting a community's historic resources."¹⁶ This document will inform future town initiatives and should be adopted into the POCD in order to transparently demonstrate municipal commitment and provide an easy place of access for residents and homeowners of Newington.

While there seem to be few, if any, municipalities in Connecticut that have adopted comprehensive preservation plans, Westport recently applied for and was awarded a \$20,000 State Historic Preservation Office HPEG grant to compile a plan for inclusion in their POCD.

Numerous municipalities in Massachusetts have preservation plans as does Montclair, New Jersey and Titusville, Florida, while the Massachusetts plans are accessible via this link: <https://www.preservationmass.org/municipalpreservationplans>

For Connecticut's State Historic Preservation Office statewide historic preservation plan, please see this link: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DECD/Historic-Preservation/o6_About_SHPO/Strategic-Plan-FinalPages.pdf?la=en

Maps and Resource Surveys

Historic District Map

The Newington Junction Historical District, a multiple resource district divided into four sub-districts (North, South, West and Newington Junction Railroad Depot), was designated in 1986. The only existing maps of the district(s) are those included in the nomination and various other unofficial websites. It is important that the Town of Newington create a municipal map that is registered on the land records to serve as the official map of the district. This would and should be used as reference for both municipal and residential homeowner projects within the districts. It would also serve persons undertaking projects outside the district, but that may affect (adversely or otherwise) the historic resources within the district.

Cultural Resource Maps

The Town of Newington should create a series of cultural resource maps which record: (a) historic district(s) within the town and other properties that are registered on the State and/or National Register of Historic Places¹⁷; (b) historic resources surveyed and identified by Historic Resource Inventory surveys, including both residential and open spaces. An archaeological sensitivity map is also recommended for purposes of town planning as well as pre-planning for construction.

¹⁶ Chris Skelly, "Municipal Historic Preservation Plans: A Sample Outline," *Preservation MA*, May 20, 2020, <https://www.preservationmass.org/municipalpreservation-plans>

¹⁷ There are currently no State Archaeological Preserves in Newington.

Historic Resource Inventory

Historic Resource Inventories (HRI) are important surveys conducted by qualified consultants that are used for informational purposes only. While they place no restrictions on any property identified during the survey, they are useful in identifying areas of potential significance in the development of the town or neighborhood. An individual survey usually consists of 150 forms which include address, current photograph of the resource, architectural description, and brief discussion of historic significance; a 20–25-page overview of the development of the town; and a list of properties that may be eligible for the State and/or National Register of Historic Places as either individual resources or as a district.

HRIs survey are strong development documents as they help to record a resource at a given point in time and allow for assessment of integrity. They also help the town to identify resources of significance in its history, as well as inform various departments of said significance should a property be up for demolition or significant alteration.

The Town of Newington has had one HRI survey. It was completed in 1978 by the Town Historian and survey consisted of 217 forms. These forms should be revisited as some of the resources may have undergone significant alterations in the 44 years since the HRI was compiled. Two additional survey forms were registered when the Newington Junction Historic District was listed on the National Register in 1986. I would recommend that the Town complete at least two HRIs in order to update, certify and verify previous forms and expand their understanding of existing resources in the municipality.

Historic Resource Inventory (HRI) form.

Funding

The State Historic Preservation Office has grants that can be used to subsidize and/or pay for all of the above projects. Survey and Planning (S&P) Grants offer up to \$20,000 for each project. HRIs are covered by S&P grants and do not require a match by the town.

Resources for Newington: Historic Preservation Planning Program <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/historicpreservationfund/preservation-planning-program.htm>

Certified Local Government Status

The Town of Newington may want to explore the possibility of obtaining Certified Local Government (CLG) status. CLG status shows a dedication to preservation and allows the town to maintain a closer relationship with SHPO and the National Park Service. It also opens additional grant possibilities and increases the amounts of S&P grants for particular projects. For instance, a CLG would be granted \$30,000 for an HRI instead of \$20,000.

There are a number of requirements for the municipality to become a CLG, of which one is the presence of a local district, property and

Table 3. Resources that may be eligible for nomination to the National or State Register

Grantmoor Motor Lodge	3000 Berlin Turnpike	394 Main Street
Emerson House	2866 Berlin Turnpike	486 Main Street
Olympia Diner	3413 Olympia Diner	644 Main Street
Church of Christ Congregational	1075 Main Street	Ronald Abrams House
Whittlesey Homestead	461 Maple Hill Avenue	Gary Eagan House
	201 Maple Hill Avenue	
	56 Francis Avenue	
Henry and Ralph Waterman House	147 Francis Avenue	
Frederick and Ruth Rowland	63 Francis Avenue	Dr. Joshua Belden House
Dorothy Eddy Carey House	202 Church Street	Rev. Brace House
Deming-Young House	282 Church Street	The Old Belden House
Deming Family House	304 Church Street	
	323 Church Street	Robbins Family
	385 Church Street	
	11 Eleanor Place	Toce House
	68 Deming Street	
	100 Deming Street	
	119 Deming Street	
Deming-Young House and Barn	202 Deming Street	Thomas Waters House
Clayton Adams House	18 East Robbins House	Edwin Welles House
David Lowry Robbins House	29 East Robbins Avenue	Fenn Manufacturing Co.
Dale Crocker	42 East Robbins Avenue	
Elisha Blinn	119 East Robbins Avenue	Factory and associated mill community
Everett Cummings House	288 East Robbins Avenue	
William Vassar House	47 Dowd Street	Factory and associated mill community
V. B. Cormier	77 Dowd Street	
Walter Stanton House	84 Dowd Street	
	35 Main Street	
	171 Main Street	Martin Kellogg II House

Barns identified during the Connecticut Barns project should be evaluated for addition to the state register. A list is available here: https://connecticutbarns.org/find/found?limit=12&category=1936&require_all=category

Historic District Commission (HDC). The Town may want to consider locally designating some of the historic resources which it owns – historic cemeteries no longer in use (i.e. Center Cemetery), the Kellogg-Eddy House (home to the Historical Society), the Lucy Robbins Welles Library, etc. – to establish local designations and form an HDC. The municipality would have access to additional grants for the maintenance of the properties. See below for more discussion of authority of HDCs and Local Historic Districts/Properties.

Of the 169 municipalities in Connecticut, 50 are CLGs¹⁸

Additional Recommendations

The Town of Newington may wish to explore opportunities to encourage the preservation of historic properties that are not main residences. Other municipalities have introduced specialized Planning and Zoning codes to protect and incentivize the maintenance of historic outbuildings and ancillary structures such as barns, corn cribs, sheds, etc. Westport has a code called 32-18 which allows secondary structures on the building to be used as income generating properties, studios, in-law apartments, and offices by offering owners relief from coverage, setbacks, and footprint. The 32-18 zoning code is available here: <https://www.westportct.gov/home/show-document?id=23558> Grants for farm outbuildings and other structures are available through the USDA.

Additional options may include grandfathering historic buildings into building and planning codes to allow for easing of code requirements; incentivizing adaptive reuse of historic factories and other under-utilized commercial structures to convert them to live/work spaces or residential units; and offer tax incentives for façade improvement. Other municipalities across the United States have initiated various programs in these areas. See LA Conservancy's adaptive reuse program here: <https://www.laconservancy.org/sites/default/files/images/Preservation%20Incentives%20Overview%2C%20LA%20Conservancy.pdf>

And Norwalk, Connecticut's façade improvement program: <https://www.norwalkct.org/DocumentCenter/View/19753/NRDA-FAÇADE-IMPROVEMENT-GRANT-PROGRAM-GUIDELINES>

It should be noted that as new areas of interest are identified, the interpretive signage program begun in Newington Junction could be extended. Resources of interest, particularly historic municipal cemeteries, could benefit from the presentation of historic context which would highlight their importance and educate the public. This material could also be incorporated into educational curriculum in a variety of ways.

¹⁸ For a full list, please see Preservation Connecticut <https://preservationct.org/clg-communities>

²⁰ Center Cemetery has marked and unmarked graves of enslaved people which should be further researched and appropriately signed. Among these graves are those of Lucy Mullins, servant to an early minister and Pomp and Zilpah Freeman and at least some of their eight children.

Interpretive Signage for Mill Hill Burying Ground - Norwalk, CT



Examples of signage in the Mill Hill Burying Ground in Norwalk, Connecticut.



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Disclaimer

This report contains the professional opinions and recommendations of Sawdust and Strata and Dr. Daryn Reyman-Lock based on the information gathered via visual observation and preliminary and limited documentary research available to consultant as of June 3, 2022. This report is believed to be accurate within the limitations of the above stated methods used for obtaining information. Nothing in this report shall be interpreted as any kind of guarantee or warranty.