

Town of Southington

Southington, Connecticut



Historic Resources Inventory Report

June 2017



BUILDING CONSERVATION ASSOCIATES INC

Town of Southington

Southington, Connecticut

Historic Inventory Report

Prepared For

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Town of Southington in Hartford County, Connecticut, developed from an 18th century farming settlement into a 19th century industrial center, and then again into the vibrant suburban community it is today. In 1986, the Town conducted a town-wide architectural survey, the *1986 Historic & Architectural Resources Survey of Southington, CT*, documenting 330 historic structures that were associated with the historical development of the town or that had architectural merit.¹ As a result of this effort, 5 historic districts, 2 thematic listings, and 32 individual properties were listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NR) in 1987–1988.² (See “National Register Overview,” for more information.)

In 2016, Building Conservation Associates, Inc. (BCA) was engaged to build upon these past achievements and update the Town’s knowledge base of its historic resources. The 1986 survey data only existed in hard-copy form, available on request at the Southington Public Library. To make the 1986 survey data more accessible and useable to town officials and the general public, and to evaluate its continued accuracy, BCA performed the following tasks:

- Scanned the 330 hard-copy State of Connecticut Historic Inventory Forms from 1986 and created PDF files for use by Town staff and residents.
- Created a Historic Resource Inventory Database (HRID) in MS Excel listing all the historic resources surveyed in 1986, including those currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places.³
- Conducted research using Tax Assessor data to determine how many resources surveyed in 1986 have since been demolished. Demolished resources were then noted in the HRID.
- Using a draft interactive map of existing resources in the HRID created by Town’s GIS consultant, New England GeoSystems, BCA reviewed resources surveyed in 1986 (both virtually and in person) that were never listed on the NR to evaluate their integrity as historic resources some 31 years after they were initially surveyed.
- During this 2017 survey update, BCA also looked at town-owned open space adjacent to historic resources, to identify visual and historical connections between historic buildings and open space that may be important to the Town of Southington’s heritage identity.
- BCA also evaluated the survey update results in light of the *Southington 2016 Plan of Conservation and Development* finding that “...the number of older residents is expected to grow significantly and this will be an important factor in Southington in the future. A changing age composition can result in a changing demand for municipal and housing types.”

¹ Only above-ground resources were surveyed in 1986 and re-evaluated in this project.

² The Horace Webster Farmhouse was listed in 1977 and the Lake Compounce Carousel was listed in 1978.

³ The historic districts listed in the NR following the 1986 survey include additional properties never surveyed in 1986.

The finding and recommendations in this report are intended to help the Town of Southington manage and promote awareness of its historic resources and heritage identity.

HISTORIC CONTEXT⁴

The Town of Southington, approximately six miles square, is located at the southwestern corner of Hartford County, Connecticut, 18 miles southwest of Hartford and 22 miles northeast of New Haven. The Quinnipiac River flows from north to south through the center of the town, and its presence has played a vital role, both economic and otherwise, in local history. Demarcating the east and west borders are ridges of hills, and a low slope of ground just to the west of the river divides the community into two parallel and rolling plains. The moderately fertile soil is sandy and contains deposits of gravel; scattered throughout town are randomly placed boulders, some quite large. Ponds of varying size also dot the landscape. Most of these features are remnants of the influence of the last ice age, which ended approximately 17,000 years ago.

From pre-European times onward, paths and roads have crisscrossed Southington linking to important settlements and cities in the region. Route 10 (Queen, North Main, Main and South Main streets) is the most important and heavily traveled of these; to 17th-century pioneers, it was known as the "New Haven Path," and later as the "Cheshire Turnpike" and "College Highway." Crossing it east/west in the south part of town is the Meriden Waterbury Turnpike, another old highway. The Farmington Canal (1828-1848) and the Conrail railroad tracks (1848–c. 1990), like Route 10, both followed the general course of the Quinnipiac River. Since 1962, the Interstate 84 highway, running in a diagonal northeast/southwest direction through Southington, has supplanted these historic pathways in importance and exerted an almost immeasurable impact on the life of the town.

The earliest known settlers in the area of present-day Southington were nomadic tribes of Tunxis and Metabesett Indians. The abundant wildlife, deer, wolves, wildcats, beavers and plentiful fish in the Quinnipiac and its tributaries were a ready source of food for the Native Americans. Archeological evidence of their encampments are scattered across many places, and their influence endures in many place names. The Indian word "Quinnipiac," for example, translates as "the long water place." Tradition also attributes the names "Wonx Spring" and "Lake Compounce" to the Indian Chief Wonx, or Wongok, who drank too freely of the spring water while overheated and died, and to an intoxicated Indian called John Compound who tried unsuccessfully to cross Lake Compounce by paddling a brass kettle acquired from the Farmington settlers. The modern southern boundary of Southington reflects a deal made in 1673 between Pethus and Ahamo, representing the Tunxis Indians, and Governor Haynes of the Connecticut Colony, in which the Indians traded the land north of this line, recognized thereafter as part of ancient Farmington, for two parcels of land and three pounds of currency.

The first permanent settlement is generally thought to have begun with the construction in 1698 by Samuel Woodruff of a house near the modern intersection of Pleasant and Woodruff streets. Like many people of his time, Woodruff hunted and trapped among the Indians for several years prior to his relocation from Farmington. Other families were encouraged to move here by the completion in 1722 of the official "South Division" or "South Farmington" survey (hence, the

⁴ This history is largely drawn, with minor modifications, from the 1986 Historic & Architectural Resources Survey of Southington, CT by Gregory E. Andrews and David F. Ransom. It has also been expanded to address historic resources constructed between 1936 and 1967, a category of properties not surveyed in 1986.

derivation of the name "Southington"). First ordered to be undertaken in 1672, this survey apportioned the Division among the 84 proprietors of Farmington based on their existing taxable property. It also set aside ample land for three major north/south highways (the basis for modern-day West Street, Route 10, and Flanders Road/East Street) and a number of east/west cross streets. (Berlin and Woodruff streets are among the few modern streets that follow these allotments.) The original grantees included men whose family names have long been prominent in town history, including Andrews, Cowles, Clark, Lewis, Barnes, and Root.

Farming was the prevailing land use, and it largely determined the town's eighteenth-century appearance. Early residents built one-and-one-half and two-story homes on their scattered properties. Many of these structures still stand, such as the c. 1767 Ebenezer Evans House on Long Bottom Road (#092) and the c. 1728 Dr. Joshua Porter House on Belleview Avenue (#005). Taverns situated along the major routes of travel were the other most common early building form, and these establishments also served as early general stores. The settlers harvested ample crops of wheat from about 1722 to 1760, when the intensity of their cultivation of this one crop exhausted the soil. Rye and Indian corn were substituted until the turn of the century, when a similar problem arose again and the farmers turned largely to tobacco and apples.

Gristmills and sawmills harnessed the ample waterpower to satisfy the milling needs of Southington's agrarian economy. By the end of the eighteenth century, these water privileges were becoming valuable for other, increasingly industrial, purposes. Mills produced buttons, combs, paper and a miscellany of metal objects. Most of the popular mill sites were in the southern part of the community, the best known of which was Captain Enos Atwater's gristmill, built c. 1767. Located near the present site of the Rex Forge Division of the J. J. Ryan Company, Inc. (#003), this mill and a later adjacent sawmill (1773) remained Southington fixtures and Atwater family possessions until the late nineteenth century.

Southington took its first step toward town incorporation with its successful petition to the Connecticut General Assembly in 1724 for recognition as a separate ecclesiastical society within the town of Farmington. As a Puritan theocracy, Connecticut mandated church attendance and governmental approval for all new parishes. The hardship of traveling up to eleven miles, either on foot or by horse, each Sabbath was judged sufficient cause for the separation. Town elders completed their first church in 1728 at the top of Burying Ground Hill (now within Oak Hill Cemetery). The structure stood on the main road to Farmington, which then passed through the parish's original cemetery. Its poor construction and small size, however, led to an ongoing controversy about its merits. A settlement finally occurred when the society voted in 1752 to replace it. Another dispute arose regarding its new site, which the county court resolved by selecting the north end of the town green for its location. The second Southington Church stood there from 1757 to 1829.

The town's population increased at a moderate annual rate of 22 per year between 1726 and 1778, which nevertheless yielded a sizable 360% growth in that 50-year period. In 1779, the General Assembly incorporated the Town of Southington and granted the community full powers of local self-government. Growth concentrated in the north/south highway corridors because of their heavier through traffic. West Street, for example, was a popular route between Bristol and points south which stimulated the erection of both taverns and homes on this thoroughfare. By 1750, the West Street School (#308) was built to serve the neighborhood. Likewise, the concentration of residents in the "South End," on present-day South End Road north of Savage Street, led to the construction of a schoolhouse as early as 1760. The extant

schoolhouse, built c. 1793 (#262), was the second structure on the site.

While the first few decades of the nineteenth century witnessed a moderation in population growth, much progress occurred in town improvements. Between 1800 and 1830, the population grew by only 37, an increase of just 2%. The decline in soil fertility and availability of better land and greater opportunities on the American frontier contributed to this leveling off. Life in Southington, however, did not remain static. Reflecting a national emphasis on "internal improvements" such as improved roads and waterways, the Cheshire Turnpike (Route 10, including the Old Turnpike), a toll road, opened around 1800 as the major north/south route and gave added impetus to the growth of a town center near the relocated Congregational Church. A few years later, in 1813, South End residents initiated the improvement and opening of the Meriden-Waterbury Turnpike, which in turn spurred the growth of traffic, trade and population along this still important roadway. Though by-passed by these highways, the community of Plantsville also began to take shape. Its focus was the junction of popular routes connecting Farmington to Waterbury and Bristol to New Haven. Joel Root opened a dry goods store here (#119, demolished) around 1800, and the prosperity of this business venture, together with a tavern at the southeast corner of this intersection (present-day Main and South Main streets), were the beginnings of this nascent village. Small-scale commercial establishments at scattered spots townwide continued to increase. Deacon Timothy Higgins, for example, opened a tannery on Prospect Street in 1823–1824 not far from his home on West Street (#295). A carding mill began operations around 1828 at the junction of South Main and Clark streets. At the center of town, meanwhile, the event of most long-lasting import during this period was the construction of the third and still standing Congregational Church (1828-1830, #97). A few stores by then were grouped around the green including the town's first dry goods establishment.

The discovery in 1825 of blue limestone suitable for the manufacture of high-grade Portland cement was another step in Southington's 19th-century industrialization. Gad Andrews, Anson Merriman and Sheldon Moore began cement production with stone quarried on Luman Andrew's farm on Andrews Street (#001), and the high profitability of the operation quickly led to intense competition among at least three firms. For a time, cement quarries and kilns dotted the landscape along Andrews Street. Southington's hydraulic cement industry, reputedly the first of its kind in America, prospered until about 1860, when the local supply of suitable stone began to run out and cheaper cement from the Hudson River valley flooded the market. At their height, local firms supplied cement for the Farmington Canal, the Shuttle Meadow dam and many significant projects elsewhere, including Hartford's extant Main Street bridge over the Park River.

The 1828 opening of the much-heralded Farmington Canal connecting New Haven and Northampton, Massachusetts, promised further industrial growth and development to the communities along its route. The canal's impact, though, remained largely a dream unfulfilled. While offering an efficient means for transporting goods from Southington to ocean-going vessels on Long Island Sound, the canal succumbed to unrealistic expectations, a heavy burden of debt incurred in its construction, and annual breaches in its banks that interrupted traffic use and undermined public confidence in its reliability. Its route in Southington followed in part the course of the Quinnipiac River and the modern path of Interstate 84 (#070, demolished). Local farmers and manufacturers found it a convenient route for shipping a variety of goods such as apples, cider, nuts and bolts, hydraulic cement and wool. The canal's long-term benefits to the town, however, remain questionable. In January 1848, the canal was supplanted by the completion of the Farmington Canal Railroad. While occupying part of the canal bed, the new

railroad passed much closer to the center of town and to local commerce. This new mode of transport was a considerable boon to Southington, and its benefits are still felt today. The former canal and railroad bed is now part of the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, an approximately eighty-four-mile greenway through Connecticut.

Far overshadowing the canal difficulties was the tremendous growth of manufacturing establishments in Southington during the early and mid-nineteenth century. A group of extraordinary entrepreneurs led by Roswell Neal, the Clark brothers (William J., Henry H., and Charles H.), A. P. and E. H. Plant, Captain Julius Bristol, Solomon Stow, Seth Peck, and H. D. Smith, were responsible for this burst of creativity and the development of a modern industrial base in Southington. The largest and most successful harnessed the Quinnipiac River as the motive power to produce a wide variety of metal tools and products. Their output included tinware, carriage bolts, cutlery, nuts, bicycle parts, edge tools, britania ware, and the machines needed to manufacture these products.

Of the many industrial enterprises that were organized in nineteenth-century Southington, Peck, Stow & Wilcox Company, founded in 1870 by merger of three firms, and the Clark Bros. Bolt Company (1854) emerged as the leaders. Other factories of note included those of the Plants Manufacturing Company (1842) in Plantsville, L. B. Frost & Son (1842) in Marion, H. D. Smith & Company (1850), the Southington Cutlery Company (1867) in the town center, whose buildings are still extant south of Center Street next to the railroad, the Atwater Manufacturing Company (1869) in Milldale (#003), and the Blakeslee Forging Company (1877) in Plantsville (#321). The facilities of these enterprises, built initially of wood and later replaced by brick factories, occupied sites along the Quinnipiac and Eight Mile rivers in close proximity to the railroad. They formed a veritable string of industrial "pearls" that fueled the local economy for generations and largely determined the course of town growth during the last half of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth.

Peck, Stow & Wilcox's roots lay in the c. 1815 pioneering tinware work of Seth Peck. Peck began producing tanners' machines that shaped the metal into tinware objects by passing it through rollers, rather than by striking the tin with a mallet on a form as was customarily done. This device and related tools for shaping and joining tin were sold to tinsmiths throughout the country who in turn fabricated containers and myriad other household objects. Solomon Stow, a resourceful employee of Peck's, broke away in 1847 and founded his own firm in competition, a sequence of events that recurred throughout Southington's industrial expansion. In nearby Berlin the Roys & Wilcox Company (1847) was engaged in a similar business.

The three firms consolidated in 1870 under the guidance of Roswell A. Neal (1821–1891), then president of Seth Peck & Company and the first president of the new concern, known as Peck, Stow & Wilcox. A Cleveland, Ohio, firm, Wilcox, Treadway & Company soon was acquired. This new enterprise enjoyed near monopoly power and prospered for almost a century. To satisfy market demand, the company expanded its product line to include housewares, edge tools, and general hardware. The number and size of its buildings in Southington demonstrated its economic impact, both national and local. The firm's headquarters were on Center Street in Southington; the edge tool factory occupied a wooden building on Summer Street halfway between the town center and Plantsville, and other factories were located at Plantsville, Berlin, Connecticut, and Cleveland, Ohio. The process of forming metal, which Seth Peck originally had addressed, continued to be the area of the company's developing expertise, culminating in a large drop forging plant along the railroad line at Southington Center. Southington was the home of the first carriage bolt manufacturing shop in America, and the town's influence in this

industry was unrivaled throughout the nineteenth century. The Clark Bros. Bolt Company became prominent because of its efficiency, innovations, and capable leaders.

A carriage bolt essentially is a section of round iron or steel bar stock threaded at one end and shaped at the other end to form a square head with spherical top. The challenge in the second quarter of the nineteenth century was to convert the fabricating process from individual handwork by a blacksmith to a mechanized and automated process.

The first mechanized techniques in the country for manufacturing carriage bolts and nuts were devised, c. 1839, by Martin Barnes and Micah Rugg at their shop in the Marion section of Southington. Barnes & Rugg invented a device for holding the metal while forming a square head. Later they developed a hammer that worked on a pivot activated by a treadle, an early forerunner of drop forging. The financial crash of 1847 put Barnes & Rugg out of business, but their manufacturing breakthrough was a market success. Other more capable entrepreneurs such as the Plant brothers imitated the techniques and opened their own factories.

The Clark brothers' operation got under way in 1851 when William J. Clark began the production of cold pressed nuts in the Milldale section of town. His brothers, Charles H. and Henry H., joined him in 1854 and they formed William J. Clark & Co. to manufacture both nuts and carriage bolts. Numbered among their employees were the pioneers, Martin Barnes and Micah Rugg. Ingenuity and inventiveness in designing machines to make their products accounted for much of the Clarks' success. For example, in 1864 William J. Clark patented a device to hot forge bolts from round bars of iron entirely by machinery. The Clarks exhibited their machines at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition in 1876.

To meet the need for more power as their business grew, the Clark brothers altered the course of the Quinnipiac River at Milldale and increased its effective fall. When their factory complex burned in 1893, it was promptly rebuilt. In 1903 the proprietorship reorganized as a corporation, Clark Bros. Bolt Company, Inc. The firm's facilities in Milldale were constructed in 1911 on Canal Street between the railroad and the bed of the Farmington canal, and subsequently enlarged from, time-to-time.

A 100th-anniversary publication by Clark Bros. in 1954 noted that starting in 1839, a total of 18 bolt and nut manufacturing companies had entered into production in and around Southington. By 1904, only nine were in existence, and in 1954 only Clark Bros. Bolt Company survived. Clark Bros. Bolt Company closed in 1987.

This industrial transformation of Southington brought a great array of changes that drastically altered the town's face. Most fundamental was a 150% increase in population between 1850 and 1880. The basis for this spurt is set forth in the 1876 national census figures, which show that manufacturing was the employment for by far the largest number of heads of households (650) with farming a distant second (180). The consequent need for worker housing resulted in the construction of blocks of Italianate and Victorian Vernacular homes near the factories on streets such as Bristol and Beecher streets. The new wealth of the officers of these enterprises, in turn, manifested itself in high style homes such as those of Edward Twichell on West Street (#294) and Marcellus Willcox on Main Street (#104).

Both a cause and product of this economic expansion was an influx of people from many ethnic groups. These immigrants came with a wide range of skills. Most began at the bottom of the economic ladder, but their success in succeeding generations is self-evident today. Their order

of arrival mirrored that in the nation as a whole. Irish laborers worked on the construction of both the canal and the canal railroad, and then found permanent employment in the new factories. St. Thomas Church on Bristol Street (#024), erected in 1860–1861, was the center of this community. Nearby, over 30 German-born families dedicated their Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1872. Large numbers of Polish families arrived at the turn of the century, becoming farmers and later substantial landowners. Their monument was the imposing Immaculate Conception Church on Summer Street (#272), to which 250 Polish-American families belonged at the time of its completion in 1923.

This growth was accompanied by substantial improvements in the town's infrastructure. A water supply system based on reservoirs in the southwest corner of town was finished in 1883–1884 (the Southington Water Works, #252), and the town pioneered in the installation of a trolley line in 1887 between Plantsville and Southington Center, the second in the state. The Southington Savings Bank, chartered in 1860, helped meet the expanding need for better financial services. New forms of recreation, too, were created to meet popular demand. In 1881 the Southington Driving Park (#193) opened on Milldale Avenue. The horse racing on its half-mile track, described as the finest in the state, became a fixture of the Agricultural Society's annual Summer Exhibition. The Norton family likewise expanded their amusement park at Lake Compounce (#200) by erecting a casino, which opened in 1896. Their landmark carrousel dates from 1890, the year in which it replaced an earlier model.

Southington's appearance and cultural facilities improved in two key respects during this period. Appalled at the disreputable state of the town common, which had become a dumping ground, neighboring businessmen and concerned citizens in 1876 landscaped the green into a "memorial park." And Southington finally acquired a permanent library; the town created a collection in 1895 and public donations, matching L. V. Walkley's generous \$5,000 gift, paid for a permanent building constructed in 1902 (#108), now the Southington Historical Society's headquarters.

Southington's factories stimulated the growth of several small communities outside the town center, notably Plantsville. Known for years as "Pearl's Corner" because of Orrin Pearl's horn comb factory, Plantsville grew up around the intersection of two major thoroughfares, and after 1800 had several stores. It acquired its name in the 1840s in recognition of the success of the Plant Brothers' manufacturing shops on the west side of the Quinnipiac River, just south of West Main Street. The presence of several other firms, including Peck, Stow & Wilcox (#319), Blakeslee Forging (#321), and H. D. Smith & Company, caused this village to vie with Southington Center for importance. The erection of the Plantsville Congregational Church (1866, #046) and the Plantsville Baptist Church (1873, #078), its own post office, a strong commercial and retail core, and beautiful homes, such as that of the William H. Cummings family on Elm Street (#067), gave this community a strong identity and a reputation as a desirable place to live.

In the southwest corner of town there was another old village called Marion. Known originally as Union District 7 it grew up because of its location at the intersection of the Bristol/New Haven highway (Marion Avenue) and the Meriden-Waterbury Turnpike. Later, the success of the L.B. Frost & Son bolt factory on Marion Avenue lent the neighborhood importance in the mid-nineteenth century. The community is traditionally thought to have been named after

Marion, Georgia, a town to which sons of a longtime Marion resident, Asahel Upson, earlier had emigrated.

Despite preeminent influence of industrial enterprises after 1850, agriculture remained a viable, even prosperous business in the ensuing years. Farmers achieved success with their specialization in fruit crops and dairy farming. The Rogers Orchards (#094) now in their eighth generation of family ownership since their ancestor Anson Merriman acquired the Ebenezer Evans House in 1809 (#092), has remained a large holding in the northeast corner of town that is known widely for its peach and apple production. Lewis Farms, now the Lewis Educational Agricultural Farm, is another old and historic farm that dates from the 1845 acquisition by F. D. Lewis of property on Flanders Road (#073). Its orchards and vegetable crops represent eight generations of continuous production.

The pace of growth quickened again in Southington at the time of the First World War and thereafter. Wartime industrial needs brought greater prosperity and even more people. Out of necessity, Southington abandoned its eleven one-room schoolhouse districts and erected modern brick schools, such as the one in Milldale (built in 1922–23, #049, demolished). The demand for housing spurred the creation of Southington's first modern subdivisions, such as the tract of houses along Oakland Road built in the 'teens and 'twenties. Empty lots surrounding Southington Center and Plantsville filled up with new homes; this occurrence, together with an expanding array of shops and services, gave these two communities an increasingly urban ambience. Now outmoded municipal facilities were replaced with modern ones, such as the town hall (1941, #098), post office (1939, #103) and police station (1925, #100). The still largely rural and agricultural north end of town became the site of the Pratt & Whitney Corporation's 1.2 million-square-foot aircraft-engine-parts plant in 1942. The construction of this factory led to an increase in the development of commercial buildings on Queen Street.

Following World War II, Southington fully transformed from a primarily agricultural and industrial community to a commuter town due to its proximity to Hartford, Bristol, and New Haven. Its population increased from approximately 10,000 in 1940 to 30,000 by 1970. During this period, the Town underwent a rapid suburbanization, which resulted in an increase in residential development and the subdivision of former farmland or uncultivated open space.

As in many communities across America adjacent to major cities, suburbanization was driven by a surge in home and automobile ownership after World War II.⁵ A change in the way housing purchases were financed lowered down payments and monthly payments; therefore increasing the number of families who could afford to purchase and maintain homes. Owning an automobile also freed these new homeowners from having to buy property near their place of employment and encouraged commuting by car. Developers met the demand for housing by designing and constructing low-density residential neighborhoods away from cities. What emerged in communities like Southington was the growth of the suburban residential development, a distinctive development centered on the single-family house on its individual lot sited within the large-scale, self-contained subdivision with a curvilinear street pattern.

The 1950s and 1960s were peak periods in the construction of single-family residential homes in Southington, and numerous developments of this type remain extant throughout the town.

⁵ David L. Ames, "Interpreting Post-World War II Suburban Landscapes as Historic Resources," U.S. Department of the Interior, N.d.

In 1951, Eastern Homes, Inc. constructed 25 prefabricated houses on a tract on Homesdale Avenue.⁶ These one-story, four-to-five room structures were designed by the National Homes Corporation in the Side-Gabled Roof-style, more commonly known as the Cape Cod. The Cape Cod is simple in its exterior design, generally with minimal architectural detail, in order to make it appear larger than its actual size. However, there is variation in window placement and the addition of small porches or carports.⁷ Turner Home, Inc. also constructed an adjacent development of this same type on Plum Orchard Road in 1953.⁸ Concentrations of Side-Gabled Roof-style houses are found throughout Southington and across America, most notably at the prototypical postwar planned community, Levittown, New York (1947–1953).

The Meadowood development, located off Meriden Avenue at Pondview Drive, is another postwar development constructed as a self-contained subdivision in the typical curvilinear street pattern.⁹ These prefabricated houses were manufactured by Admiral Homes, Inc. and constructed by the Meadowood Corporation” specifically for New England climate and New England tastes in home styling” in 1955–1960.¹⁰ The houses ranged in architectural style and were a mixed of Side-Gabled Roof and Ranch-style houses. Ranch houses are typically broad one-story structures with low-pitched roofs and an asymmetrical façade with an off-center entrance and large picture windows.¹¹ Examples of Ranch houses in the Meadowood development include 47 and 75 Pond View Drive.

The development of single-family residences continued into the 1960s, further stimulated by the construction of the highway in 1964 that later became I-84.¹² Though the road bisected Southington in two, it facilitated commuter travel in the region. As a result, new apartment buildings were constructed. Examples include two garden apartment complexes at 273 Queen Street (1964), which the Hartford Courant heralded as Southington’s “first total electric garden apartment community,” and at 78 Laning Street (1967).

During this postwar period, numerous religious, educational, and commercial buildings were also built in response to Southington’s growing population. Two notable modern religious buildings in Southington are the Mary Our Queen Catholic Church at 248 Savage Place built in 1964 and the First Evangelical Lutheran Church at 232 Bristol Street built in 1966. Several school buildings were constructed, including Hatton Elementary at 50 Spring Lake Road (1957), William M. Strong Elementary at 820 Marion Avenue (1957), Flanders Elementary at 100 Victoria Drive (1965), and Kelley Elementary at 501 Ridgewood Road (1966). There was also an increase in commercial development in the 1950s and 1960s, especially along Queen Street. The Days Inn Southington at 30 Laning Street was originally constructed as a Motor Lodge in 1965 and featured an adjacent Howard Johnson Restaurant (now the T.D. Homers at 461 Queen Street). This period also saw development of suburban strip malls, like the ShopeRite Mall at 750 Queen Street, constructed in 1961. Apple Valley Bowling, constructed in 1964, is another example of postwar commercial architecture. The extant postwar commercial buildings in Southington have been highly altered and do not retain their historic integrity.

⁶ “Southington Model Home Open for Inspection Today,” *The Hartford Courant*, March 18, 1951, p. 3.

⁷ Virginia Savage McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses*, 2015, p. 588.

⁸ “32 Houses Sold in Plum Orchard Development of Turner Homes Inc.,” *The Hartford Courant*, July 26, 1953, p. 6.

⁹ “Four Model Homes will be Open Today in Meadowood Tracts, Southington,” *The Hartford Courant*, May 8, 1955.

¹⁰ “Four Model Homes.”

¹¹ *Americans Houses*, p. 597.

¹² “Sharp Rise Indicated in New Home Building,” *The Hartford Courant*, August 29, 1965, p. 11C.

Today, Southington remains a vibrant suburban community with a variety of historic resources that reflect its rich history of development.

NATIONAL REGISTER OVERVIEW

Southington Properties in the National Register

The Town of Southington has 34 individual properties, 5 historic districts and 2 thematic listings listed in the National Register of Historic Places between 1977 and 1988.

Individual properties listed in the National Register are:

- Luman Andrews House
- Atwater Manufacturing Company
- Selah Barnes House
- Barnes-Frost House
- Blakeslee Forging Company
- Icabod Bradley House
- Clarks Brothers Factory No. 1
- Clarks Brothers Factory No. 2
- Avery Clark House
- Captain Josiah Cowles House
- Ebenezer Evans House
- Levi B. Frost House
- Stephen Grannis House
- Timothy Hart House
- House at 1010 Shuttle Meadow Road
- House at 590 West Street
- Hurwood Company
- Lake Compounce Carousel
- Rosewell Moore II House
- Peck, Stow & Wilcox Factory
- Dr. J. Porter House
- Pultz & Walkley Company
- Jonathan Root House
- Dr. Henry Skelton House
- Southington Public Library
- Horace Webster Farmhouse
- West Street School
- Rev. John Wightman House
- Valentine Wightman House
- Woodruff House
- Captain Samuel Woodruff House
- Ezekiel Woodruff House
- Jotham Woodruff House
- Urbana Woodruff House

Southington's National Register historic districts are:

- Marion Historic District
- Meriden Avenue-Oakland Road Historic District
- Plantsville Historic District
- Rogers Farm Historic District
- Southington Center Historic District

The two thematic listings in the National Register are the Colonial Houses of Southington and the Historic Industrial Complexes of Southington, CT.

About the National Register

The National Register was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NPHA), and is maintained by the National Park Service (NPS), an agency of the Department of the Interior. It is an inventory of national historic resources that meet the NPS's set of criteria for historic significance. A National Register historic resource can be listed individually, within a historic district, or as part of a thematic/multiple property resource listing.¹³

The NPS defines historic significance as the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture of a community and the importance of a space, element, or feature to a historic property. The NPS developed the following criteria for evaluation of historic significance for "districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association," and:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.¹⁴

Historic resources that meet one or more of the above criteria are eligible for inclusion in the National Register. Cemeteries, birthplaces, graves, religious properties, relocated structures, reconstructed buildings, commemorative properties, and properties that have achieved significance only within the last 50 years are generally ineligible for inclusion in the National Register. However, consideration can be given to historic resources that demonstrate

¹³ A thematic listing or multiple property listing is a group of significant properties related in their shared themes, trends, and patterns of history rather than in their geographical location as with a historic district.

¹⁴ National Park Service (1990, rev. 1997), *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.

exceptional significance but might otherwise be ineligible.

To be eligible for the National Register, historic resources must also retain their historic integrity. The concept of integrity refers to a historic resource's ability to express the intentions of its designers through its materials, form, massing, and ornamental details. A historic resource's period of significance helps determine which aspects of its history are worth preserving. Historic buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts exhibit varying degrees of integrity. Integrity measures the level of accuracy with which a historic resource can be interpreted for the public and is related to the degree to which the resource's historic architectural design is intact. The higher a historic resource's integrity level, the more significant is its contribution to our understanding of its period of significance. Integrity is commonly evaluated by national, state, and municipal regulatory agencies according to the set of criteria established by the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

The National Register confers an honorary designation upon historic resources. The NHPA also established a process known as Section 106 Review, which offers a legal protection for properties included in the National Register of Historic Places. According to Section 106 of the Act, any federally funded or federally permitted work that could potentially have an impact on a property included in the National Register is required to be reviewed by the appropriate federal agency before work can commence. The Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) also allows for review of publicly funded work that could affect NR properties. The Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office conducts reviews under Section 106 and CEPA.

The NPS administers a historic preservation tax incentives program with the support of the Internal Revenue Service and the State Historic Preservation Office. Two types of tax credits are available through the Tax Reform Act of 1986 for the rehabilitation of existing buildings. In both cases, the tax credit percentage is derived from the amount spent on the rehabilitation project. A 20% tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of historic buildings. The rehabilitation project must comply with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, and the credit is applicable to historic buildings that are either listed, or determined eligible for listing, in the National Register. This tax credit is not applicable to properties used exclusively as the owner's private residence; the property must be depreciable and used for the production of income.

A separate 10% tax credit is available for the rehabilitation of non-historic, non-residential buildings built before 1936. Historic buildings already listed in the National Register are ineligible for the 10% tax credit. Rehabilitation projects that take advantage of the 10% tax credit are not subject to a review against the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. Any building that has been moved after 1935 is ineligible for the 10% tax credit; however, moved buildings that have been designated as historic are still eligible for the 20% tax credit discussed above.¹⁵ Some states, including Connecticut, offer state tax credits as well. See the Recommendations section for more information on tax incentives.

HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORY DATABASE

The Historic Resource Inventory Database (HRID) created for this study is a searchable and sortable database of the Southington historic resources surveyed in 1986. A historic resource is a structure or group of structures, landscape, or object over 50 years of age. BCA compiled Southington's historic resources data into Excel using predetermined categories. The data

¹⁵ Technical Preservation Services, National Park Service (2012), *Historic Preservation Tax Incentives*.

categories can be searched or sorted using the drop-down menu located beside each category in the database and include the following:

- GIS Pin: unique identifying number for resource in the Town's GIS property database (also called the map lot unit).
- Location: street address or location for a structure, group of structures, landscape, or object as written on the 1986 survey form or National Register nomination form.
- Year Built: approximate or known date of construction as written on the 1986 survey form or National Register nomination form.¹⁶
- Historic Resource Name: historic name of resource as written on the 1986 survey form or National Register nomination form.
- Extant: resource exists on its original location (YES) or has been demolished (NO).
- 1986 Southington Survey: surveyed in 1986 (YES) or not surveyed in 1986 (NO).
- 1986 Southington Survey No.: resource inventory number as written on the 1986 survey form.
- National Register Eligibility: BCA's assessment of eligibility of a resource for National Register Listing (POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE/NOT ELIGIBLE) or if a property is already listed in the National Register (LISTED) or if a property has been demolished (DEMOLISHED).
- National Register Listed (Individual): resource is listed individually in the National Register (YES) or resource is not listed individually (NO).
- National Register Resource Name (Individual): name as written in the National Register nomination form.
- National Register Thematic Listing: resource is listed within a thematic district (YES) or resource is not listed within a thematic district (NO).
- National Register Resource Name (Thematic Listing): name as written in the National Register nomination form.
- National Register District: resource is listed within a historic district (YES) or resource is not listed within a historic district (NO).
- National Register Resource Name (District): name as written in the National Register nomination form.

¹⁶ In some cases, the "year built" on the 1986 survey form or National Register nomination form may not match the "year built" as listed in the Town's GIS property database.

- Notes: Notes relating to the resource or related to a specific data category.

The following is an overview of the resources listed in the database¹⁷:

- 330 historic resources were surveyed in the 1986 Historic & Architectural Resources Survey of Southington, CT.
- 322 resources are listed in one of the five historic districts in the National Register.
- 36 resources are listed in one of the two thematic listings in the National Register.
- 34 resources are listed individually in the National Register.
- 56 historic resources have been demolished since the 1986 survey or since the resource was listed in the National Register.

Together, these historic resources reflect Southington's rich history of development from a rural European settlement built on Native American lands to a vibrant suburban community.

1986 SURVEY UPDATE

The 2017 field survey was conducted in the spring of 2017. The goal of the field survey was to assess the existing integrity of the historic resources surveyed in 1986 but never listed on the NR, and to identify connections between historic resources and designated open space owned by the Town of Southington.¹⁸

Methodology

BCA identified 98 existing historic resources that were surveyed in 1986, but not subsequently listed in the National Register. BCA conducted "desktop" surveys for all of these properties, comparing the 1986 survey data for each property with information in the Town of Southington's online Tax Assessor database and images on Google Street View to assess whether the properties retained the historic and architectural significance cited in the 1986 survey and noting significant alterations or changes to historic fabric since 1986. BCA then conducted an in-person field survey in the spring of 2017 to visually confirm the desktop survey results.

BCA determined that four of these resources were not eligible for the National Register because they lacked integrity.¹⁹ A lack of integrity renders a resource ineligible for listing, because the resource no longer conveys architectural or historic significance under the National Register Criteria. These four properties are noted as "Not Eligible" in the HRID under the "National Register Eligibility" category. BCA determined that the remaining 94 resources retained integrity, and therefore, included these resources in the 2017 field survey.

¹⁷ In some cases, a listing for a historic resource could correspond to multiple buildings or structures at a single location.

¹⁸ Since this project comprised an update of the 1986 survey, this study did not address potential historic resources that were never surveyed in 1986. Therefore, there may be many other potential historic resources in Southington that are not captured in the HRID.

¹⁹ See National Register Overview for more information.

The criteria used for evaluation of the historic and architectural significance of these resources are based on the NPS Criteria for Evaluation, and were incorporated into a field survey form. This survey form was developed by BCA as a continuation sheet to the 1986 field survey forms, which previously documented physical characteristics and significance of each surveyed historic resource. Current photographs of the primary elevation for each resource were taken and inserted into the update forms. All photos included on the forms were taken by BCA unless otherwise noted. (See the Appendix for completed field survey forms of all properties surveyed in the 2017 field survey.)

National Register recommendations for historic resources surveyed as part of the 2017 field survey are discussed in the Findings section.

Findings

Of the 330 historic resources surveyed in 1986, 196 were formally listed in the National Register as either individual listings, or as buildings in historic districts or thematic districts. Additional properties not surveyed in 1986 were included within the district boundaries.²⁰ Since 1986, 56 properties have been demolished. The remaining properties were re-evaluated in the current project.

In the 1986 survey report, the survey authors recommended specific nominations to the National Register. Below is a table of those recommendations, how they were pursued, and how they relate to the properties re-evaluated for this report.

Historic Districts and Thematic Groups Recommended for Listing in 1986	Listed?	Is the Listing Recommendation Still Valid?
Southington Center	Yes	
Plantsville	Yes	
Marion	Yes	
Eden Avenue	No	Yes, area around Eden and Bristol Street retains characteristic of a vernacular 19 th century neighborhood.
Meriden Avenue/Oakland Road	Yes	
18 th and 19 th Century Thematic	Yes (Colonial Houses of Southington)	It appears that additional resources from the 1986 survey could be included.
Federal Thematic	No	No; the two best examples from the 1986 survey (Timothy Hart House, #072, and Joel Root House, #119) have been demolished.
Greek Revival Thematic	No	Yes
Italianate Thematic	No	Yes
Queen Anne Thematic	No	No
Colonial Revival Thematic	No	No
Bungalow/Craftsman Thematic	No	Yes; to this category could be added the properties cited as "Four-Square" style in the spreadsheet.
Industrial Thematic	Yes (Historic Industrial Complexes of Southington)	

2017 National Register Recommendations

“Potentially Eligible” Properties in the HRID

All extant historic resources in the HRID that were previously surveyed in 1986 but never listed on the NR were re-evaluated by BCA as part of this study. Any property noted as “Potentially Eligible” in the HRID could be nominated to the NR, pending completion of the required documentation.

Historic Districts

In addition to the still-valid historic district recommendations in the above chart, the Oak Street/Merrell Avenue area surveyed in 1986 retains characteristics of a vernacular Victorian neighborhood and has potential eligibility as a NR historic district. This area requires further evaluation, including identification of potential district boundaries, which is beyond the scope of this study.

Notable Individual Properties

The following properties (listed below with their 1986 survey inventory form number) appear to retain architectural integrity *and* have notable historic significance within the local context. These properties are especially good candidates for nomination to the National Register as individually significant properties.

- 805 South End Road, Curtiss House #263
- 44 School Street, Edson Frost House, #254
- 572 South End Road, South End Schoolhouse, #262
- 244 Meriden Avenue, Frank N. Wells House, #177

Other

The following cemeteries (listed with their 1986 survey number), with the exception of the reservoir dam, appear significant for their great age, the importance of the graves of people important to Southington’s history, and the design of their tombstones. These cemeteries could be individually nominated to the National Register. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office is recommended.

- Merriman Burying Ground, #128
- Oak Hill Cemetery, #250

The Lewis Farm (LEAF) property historic (c. 19th century) Cold Storage building largely retains its historic architectural integrity as a farming property. This building was not surveyed in 1986 and is not in the HRID. Although the farm itself has lost integrity due to alterations, the historic Cold Storage building is potentially eligible for the National Register under criterion C for design as a distinctive example of an agricultural cold storage facility still in use today.

HISTORIC OPEN SPACE

Methodology

Using the Historic Resource Inventory Database and Esri Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping software, the Town of Southington, BCA, and the Town's GIS consultant, New England GeoSystems, developed a draft interactive map illustrating the locations of Southington's existing historic resources in relation to the Town's designated and managed open space. Points on this map identify the location of resources surveyed in 1986 and listed in the National Register, illustrated in different shades of pink. Clicking on a point opens a pop-up window that displays information from the Historic Resource Inventory related to the resource. Polygons illustrate the boundaries of Town open space. Dedicated open space and managed open space were the two types of Town open space assessed in this survey, and are illustrated in different shades of green on the interactive map.

BCA used the draft GIS map to identify 17 potentially significant dedicated or managed open spaces adjacent to historic resources. BCA conducted research into the history of the open spaces adjacent to historic resources using 1869 and 1931 maps.²¹ One resource, the Merriman Burying Ground, is both a managed open space and a historic resource. Seventeen of the open-space sites are listed below with an assessment of "historically significant," "possibly significant," or "not notably significant" assigned to each. More research into the history of these sites should be performed before making a final determination as to the historic significance of these sites.

BCA surveyed the open spaces assessed as significant or possibly significant to explore ways to highlight connections between existing historic resources and Town dedicated and managed open spaces. See the Recommendations section.

Historically Significant Open Space

The following sites have historic significance:

- **Curtiss Open Space:** The site is located adjacent to South End Road south of the Meriden Waterbury Turnpike and was included in BCA's field survey. It was most likely originally part of the Curtiss family farm. Rev. Jeremiah Curtiss purchased the land in the early 18th century. It is illustrated as the property of H.B. Curtiss (great-great grandson of Jeremiah Curtiss) on the 1869 map and as the property of C.R. Curtiss on the 1931 map. The adjacent historic resources at 805 and 821 South End Road are still owned by the Curtiss family (#263 and #264).
- **Farmington Canal Heritage Trail:** The Farmington Canal Heritage Trail follows the former Farmington Canal bed, which runs north-south through the center of

²¹ Unionville, Southington Town, Berlin, Southington and Plantsville, Plantsville and Southington, Forestville, Kensington, Hartford City and County 1869, Connecticut. Baker & Tilden: 1869. Hartford, New Haven, Middlesex, Litchfield, Tolland Counties, 1931, Connecticut. Dolph & Stewart, 1931.

Southington. It was constructed in 1825–1828 and later became part of the New Haven and Northampton Railroad in the 1840s. Though the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail is not a dedicated or managed Town Open Space, it presents a unique opportunity to establish a connection between numerous historic resources throughout the Town.

- **Lewis Open Space:** The site is located adjacent to Flanders Road at Pilgrim Lane and was included in BCA's field survey. It was likely originally part of F.D. Lewis' farm. Lewis purchased the property in 1845, and is illustrated as the owner of the property on the 1869 map. The Lewis Open Space comprises the LEAF property for farming education and includes a historic resource, the circa 1900 Cold Storage building, that is potentially individually eligible for the NR.
- **Merriman Burying Ground:** The site is located adjacent to Marion Avenue at Nutmeg Drive, and is a Town-managed open space. It was included in the 1986 survey and in BCA's field survey. It is one of the oldest burial grounds in Southington, established by the Baptist Church in the 1760s. The first person to be buried there died in 1764, and the last person to be buried there died in 1855.
- **Plainville Reservoir:** The site is located in the northeast corner of Southington near Shuttle Meadow Road and was included in BCA's field survey. Before 1884, the site of the Plainville Reservoir was most likely uncultivated or cultivated open space. The reservoir and dam were constructed in 1884 by the Plainville Water Company. The dam is not extant.
- **Porter Open Space:** The site is located adjacent to East Street between Meriden Avenue and Rustic Oak Drive and was included in BCA's field survey. It is illustrated on the 1869 map as adjacent to the Jos. Platt House, though the site is likely originally part of Dr. Joshua D. Porter's farm [#005]. Porter was one of the largest landowners and slave owners in 18th century Southington.
- **Town Green:** The site is located on Main Street between Center Street and Columbus Avenue and was included in BCA's field survey. The Town Green was originally used as a central dumping ground known as "Pigweed Park." In 1876, the site was turned into the Town Green and monuments were later erected on the site.
- **Woodruff Open Space:** The site is located adjacent to Kensington Road at East Street and was included in BCA's field survey. It was most likely originally part of Ezekiel and Urbana Woodruff's farm parcel. The Woodruff family is noted as the first European settlers to permanently settle in Southington.
- **Captain Samuel S. Woodruff Open Space:** The site is located adjacent to Berlin Street between Stonegate Road and East Street and was included in BCA's field survey. The site is most likely historically part of Woodruff's farm. It is illustrated as being owned by S.S. Woodruff on the 1869 map.

Possibly Significant Open Space

The following sites may have historic significance, but require additional research beyond the scope of this project:

- **Centennial Park:** The site is located at Grove Street and Hillside Avenue in the Plantsville Historic District. The park was established at an unknown date. It is not illustrated on either the 1869 or 1931 map.
- **Grooman Open Space:** The site of the Grooman Open Space is located adjacent to Flanders Road between Pattonwood Drive and Laning Street and was included in BCA's field survey. Historically, the majority of this site was most likely uncultivated open space, with a portion of the site possibly occupied by the Connecticut Advent Christian Camp-meeting Association, which was established c. 1869. It is also possible that the Grooman Open Space was historically cultivated farmland or part of the Grooman family's 30-acre farm parcel.
- **Marion Avenue Open Spaces:** The two sites are located on either side of Marion Avenue south of the Meriden Waterbury Turnpike and were included in BCA's field survey. The lands in this area were first surveyed and divided for sale in 1739. Marion Avenue south of the Meriden Waterbury Turnpike later was developed with a row of residences as illustrated on the 1869 map. Part or all of the opens spaces were likely part of the Upson family farm, who owned hundreds of acres south of the Turnpike.
- **Recreation Park:** The site is located adjacent to South End Road north of the Meriden Waterbury Turnpike and was included in BCA's field survey. The park was possibly established circa 1930 and is illustrated on the 1931 map as the Southington Recreation Park. The South End Schoolhouse [#262] is illustrated on the site on the 1869 map as well as several residential developments, including the Jane Lee, A. Tuttle, and J.A. Mathews houses.

Open Space Without Notable Significance

The following sites have no identified historic significance.

- **Academy Street Open Space:** The site is located on Academy Street between Main Street and Academy Lane, adjacent to the Town Hall. It has no known historic significance.
- **Summer Street Open Space:** The site is located adjacent to Summer Street between West Main and West Center Streets. Summer Street retains a notable row of 19-century residential architecture. The Summer Street Open Space is situated between the Quinnipiac River and the former Farmington Canal, which was constructed in 1825–1828 and later became part of the New Haven and Northampton Railroad in the 1840s. Historically, this was likely uncultivated open space and has no known historic significance.
- **West Main Street:** The site is located at West Main and Summer Streets, adjacent to the Quinnipiac River. Historically, this was likely uncultivated open space and has no known historic significance.
- **South Main Street Median:** The site is located at South Main and Buckland Streets. It is a small median of green space with no known historic significance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

General

- Update the draft GIS map for Southington with the most current version of the HRID.
- Consider conducting a new town-wide survey to capture any potential historic resources not surveyed in 1986 and not listed on the NR (and therefore not currently in the HRID).
- Make the 1986 survey form PDFs and NR nomination form PDFs available on the Town and Southington Library websites so the general public can access them.
- Form a Southington “Heritage Identity Study Committee” consisting of key stakeholders: planning and economic development officials, the Town Historian, Historical Society representatives, Chamber of Commerce, Farm Heritage Committee members, Southington Library local history librarian, interested volunteers, and other relevant parties to spearhead protection and promotion of Southington’s historic resources and heritage identity. Strategic recruitment of volunteers with creative skills (architecture, real estate, public relations, graphic design, creative writing, marketing) can help facilitate the committee’s work at low or no cost.
- A key objective of this committee should be the establishment of a clear “heritage brand” for Southington to help distinguish the Town. This brand should include a graphic identity and visual narrative that clearly convey Southington’s “sense of place;” that is, what is most important to residents about the Town’s historic identity and values, including its built environment. Such a brand would serve as a town mission statement as well as a marketing and economic development tool. The research conducted for the *2016 Southington Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD)* can be utilized to develop this brand.
- This committee can work towards the goals of the POCD for protecting historic resources:
 - Protect historical and archaeological resources.
 - Promote awareness of historic and archaeological resources.
 - Encourage sensitive ownership of historical and archaeological resources.
 - Encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings when it will aid in the preservation of the historic structure and is appropriate given the location of the site.

Protect Historical and Archaeological Resources

The Heritage Identity Study Committee can explore the options referenced in the POCD as the most effective means of protecting historic resources:

- Responsible ownership or sensitive stewardship.
- Local historic districts with regulatory boards.
- Village districts overseen by a Planning and Zoning Commission.
- Use of historic overlay zones and adaptive re-use provisions in zoning regulations.
- Adoption of tax abatement programs.
- Nomination to the State or National Register of Historic Places.

Promote Awareness of Historic and Archaeological Resources

Following are some ways to promote awareness of historic resources:

- Nominate additional resources to the National Register of Historic Places, using the recommendations in this report. Volunteers or professionals can complete this work, following the guidance of the CT SHPO and the National Park Service. See <https://www.nps.gov/nr/>
- Expand the historical information currently on the Town's website to convey its rich history and promote its vast array of historic resources.
- Collaborate with the Historical Society, Library, and Chamber of Commerce to promote the town's history in a coordinated way. For example, the Chamber of Commerce can highlight the Southington Center Historic District, Plantsville, and other historic commercial areas on its website and in its activities.

Encourage Sensitive Ownership of Historical and Archaeological Resources

Following are some ways to encourage sensitive ownership of historic resources:

- In conjunction with the Library and Historical Society, host a "How to Research the History of Your House" workshop for homeowners, utilizing the information digitized and created for this study.
- In conjunction with the CT SHPO, hold a workshop for homeowners on the state Historic Homes Tax Credit program. This program provides a 30% tax credit, up to \$30,000 per dwelling unit, for the rehabilitation of 1-4 family buildings. After completion of rehabilitation work, one unit must be owner-occupied for a period of five years. The credit requires a minimum of \$15,000 in qualified rehabilitation expenditures to qualify. Buildings must be listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of a historic district, and all work must comply with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*. The credit cannot be taken by the homeowner, but can be sold to a corporation. For details, consult the website of the CT SHPO.

- Consider the development of voluntary architectural design guidelines for Southington Center Historic District, in order to maintain the historic character of this important gateway to Southington while still allowing for change and growth.

Encourage Adaptive Reuse of Historic Buildings

- In conjunction with the CT SHPO, hold a workshop for commercial building owners and developers on:
 - The federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program. This program establishes a 20% tax credit on Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures associated with the rehabilitation of income-producing properties. Buildings must be listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of a historic district, and all work must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. For details, consult the website of the CT SHPO.
 - The CT Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program. This program establishes a 25% tax credit on Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures associated with the rehabilitation of residential properties of five units or more, mixed residential and non-residential properties, or non-residential properties consistent with the historic character of a property or district in which the property is located. An additional credit is available for projects that include affordable housing. Buildings must be listed on the National or State Register of Historic Places, either individually or as part of a historic district, and all work must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. State tax credits on qualifying projects must be combined with the 20% federal historic preservation tax credits. For details, consult the website of the CT SHPO.
 - Consider membership in the Connecticut Main Street Center, which provides support in leveraging historic identify for economic development.

Highlighting Historic Open Space

To highlight connections between existing historic resources and Town dedicated and managed open spaces, consider the following steps:

- Make the Historic Resource Inventory GIS map publically available to increase public awareness of Southington's unique historic resources. The map's interactive feature allows for easy accessibility of information related to the Town's historic resources and is an opportunity to relate the connection of historic resources to Town open space.
- Conduct additional map and textual research on open spaces to more fully understand their significance. See the National Park Service Preservation Brief 36, "Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes," by Charles A. Birnbaum, ASLA.

- Include narrative text on the Town of Southington website to highlight particularly significant open space.
- Prepare a “driving tour” of historic resources in Southington that includes significant open space

Heritage Identity and the 55+ Population

Southington’s long and significant history as a Colonial New England town can be leveraged to promote its attractiveness to the rapidly growing segment of the population over 55 years in age. This demographic, whether represented by long-time residents, tourists, or prospective residents, are attracted by local history and historic character.

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation provides the following guidance on heritage tourism:

- *Collaborate.* Much more can be accomplished by working together than by working alone. Successful cultural heritage tourism programs bring together partners who may not have worked together in the past.
 - Ideally Town government collaborating with local history advocates and local civic and business organizations.
- *Find the Fit Between the Community and Tourism.* Balancing the needs of residents and visitors is important to ensure that cultural heritage tourism benefits everyone. It is important to understand the kind and amount of tourism that your community can handle.
 - Online surveys and focus groups can help in the information-gathering process.
- *Make Sites and Programs Come Alive.* Competition for time is fierce. To attract visitors, you must be sure that the destination is worth the drive.
 - Ensure that the unique qualities of Southington are highlighted and promoted.
- *Focus on Quality and Authenticity.* Quality is an essential ingredient for all cultural heritage tourism, and authenticity is critical whenever heritage or history is involved.
- *Preserve and Protect Resources.* A community’s cultural, historic, and natural resources are valuable and often irreplaceable.
 - Preservation of historic resources protects a community’s authentic and unique character.

Consider the following to take advantage of Southington’s wonderful heritage identity to attract the economic opportunities offered by increased tourism and new residents:

- As the National Trust for Historic Preservation holds, “Adaptive re-use should be the default, and demolition the last resort.” Once a historic resource is gone, it’s gone forever. The rehabilitation of historic buildings greatly contributes to the quality of life and economic vitality of Southington while preserving historic resources significant to the Town’s history. Rehabilitation encourages reinvestment in the local community, supports long-term community sustainability by revitalizing neighborhoods, and raises and protects local property values. It promotes the conservation of environmental resources through the retention of existing structures and infrastructures. It stimulates the local economy through the growth of heritage tourism and the creation of jobs. It is an essential tool by which a community achieves broader environmental, social, and

economic goals. To encourage the rehabilitation of historic buildings, promote federal and state historic rehabilitation tax incentives on the town website.

- The rehabilitation of a historic structure or complex of structures into market rate multi-family housing can attract a sophisticated “young” senior population from nearby urban areas looking to downsize yet live in a beautiful area with a sense of community and history.
- Explore opportunities for downtown living and walkability. Southbury, Connecticut, has been famously attracting seniors since the completion of its Heritage Village development in the 1960s. However, in keeping with the practice at the time, the development is geared towards car ownership. Consider promoting walkable development. Fifty-five plus residents relocating from urban areas are looking to be close to services and amenities. Southington’s historic downtown has a distinctive heritage identity reflected in the Southington Center Historic District. Particular attention should also be paid to development along the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail, which offers an opportunity for mixed-use development and walkability.

Resources

The following organizations provide historic preservation consultation, economic development assistance, training, and funding opportunities.

- 1772 Foundation
- Connecticut Main Street Center
- Connecticut SHPO
- Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Main Street America
- National Park Service, Discover History
- Project for Public Spaces
- State of Connecticut Statewide Historic Preservation Plan

APPENDIX

2017 Field Survey Forms