

II. CULTURAL & HISTORIC RESOURCES



2014

Middletown, Rhode Island Comprehensive Community Plan

MIDDLETOWN WILL BE KNOWN AS A COMMUNITY THAT PRESERVES ITS PAST AND VALUES CULTURAL ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ITS RESIDENTS AND VISITORS. THE TOWN AND ITS RESIDENTS WILL RECOGNIZE CULTURAL AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION AS A KEY COMPONENT TO THE TOWN'S FUTURE GROWTH, ECONOMY, CHARACTER, AND APPEAL OF THE TOWN.

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MIDDLETOWN, RHODE ISLAND COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY PLAN

Supporting Documents

- Historic and Architectural Resources of Middletown, Rhode Island: A Preliminary Report.* Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission. 1979.
- Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island.* Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission. 2002.
- Middletown, Rhode Island: Houses, History, Heritage.* Middletown Historical Society. 1990.
- O'Shea, Phillip. *Death Comes Once, a Cemetery is Forever: The Search for Middletown's Lost Graveyards.* 1997.
- Preliminary Survey Report, Town of Middletown: June, 1979.* Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission. 1979.
- The Paradise Loop Scenic Highway Stewardship Plan.* Rhode Island Scenic Highways Board. 2003.

INTRODUCTION

The Cultural and Historic Resources Element identifies local historic and cultural resources, describes why they are significant, and looks to provide the policies, recommendations, and tools to plan for the preservation, protection, and enhancement of those resources.

There are many great historic and cultural resources within Middletown that offer residents and visitors opportunities to learn about their heritage and the history of the town and nation. It is a priority of the town to protect these historic sites and landscapes and to sustain the quality of life and rural character of the town.

CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Pressure on the land to accommodate growth threatens the town's rich cultural heritage.**

- Several of Middletown's most important historic resources have no form of recognition or protection.
- Agriculture has always been one of Middletown's most important activities. Any further reduction in the number of farms in Middletown would alter the essential character of the town as farms themselves are part of the scenic beauty of the area.
- Recognition and protection of the town's historic resources can help preserve the character of the town for future generations and serve as an educational resource.
- Our cultural resources are the underpinnings of the tourism economy and they need to be protected and enhanced if we are to remain economically healthy.

Cultural and Historic Vision Statement: Middletown will be known as a community that preserves its past and values cultural enrichment opportunities for its residents and visitors. The town and its residents will recognize cultural and historic preservation as a key component to the town's future growth, economy, character, and appeal of the town.

A preliminary survey of Middletown conducted in 1979 by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission identified seven districts and 105 individual structures and sites of historic interest.

THESE CULTURAL RESOURCES REFLECT A BROAD SPECTRUM OF TIME, ARCHITECTURAL TRENDS, AND EVENTS. INCLUDED ARE VERNACULAR FARMHOUSES AND FARM LANDSCAPES, SOME GOOD EXAMPLES OF WHICH ARE SEEN ALONG WEST MAIN ROAD AND MITCHELL LANE; LUXURIOUS MANSIONS, NOTABLY THE WILLIAM VERNON HOUSE, THE HAMILTON HOPPIN HOUSE, THE JACOB CRAM HOUSE, AND WILLIAM REDWOOD'S COUNTRY HOUSE; ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSES – PARADISE SCHOOL AND THE PEABODY SCHOOL; THE EXTENSIVE ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL, WITH ITS OUTSTANDING CHAPEL; WHITEHALL, BISHOP BERKELEY'S COUNTRY PLACE; THE BERKELEY MEMORIAL CHAPEL AND THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS; THE MIDDLETOWN TOWN HALL; A GRANGE HALL; AN EARLY MOTOR COURT; AN AIRPORT; A MILESTONE; WORLD WAR II STRUCTURES; AND SEVERAL NATURAL FEATURES KNOWN AND APPRECIATED FOR CENTURIES – PURGATORY CHASM, HANGING ROCK, AND THE BEACHES.

General History of Middletown

For slightly more than one hundred years, 1639 to 1743, Middletown existed as the northern portion of Newport which shared the island of Aquidneck, once called Rhode Island, with the town of Portsmouth to the north. By mid-century, the growing population felt increasingly alienated from the urbane, sophisticated merchants of Newport who still dominated the political arena. They petitioned the General Assembly for political independence and, in 1743, Middletown was set off as a separate town.

Middletown's 14.7 square miles reached from Narragansett Bay on the west to the Sakonnet River on the east, bordered by Portsmouth to the north, Newport to the southwest and the Atlantic Ocean

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to the southeast. Fertile soil encouraged the early settlers and their successors to clear the land for planting, in the process constructing stone walls with the rocky debris to act as fences and boundary markers.

In 1748, the first census since incorporation showed 680 persons living within Middletown. Most of the residents were farmers and their families plus a few tradesmen and a few wealthy Newport merchants that built their large summer estates here, some of which still exist today. Notable residents included Bishop George Berkeley, the philosopher, who bought a 96-acre tract of Middletown farmland while he waited funding from Parliament for a university he planned to establish in Bermuda.

In December 1776 about 9,000 British and Hessian troops came ashore at Weaver's Cove on the west shore of Middletown near the present location of Greene Lane. During the next four years, the boundary between Newport and Middletown became a line of defense, first for the British and then for the colonials and the French. Some of the redoubts and other traces of that fortification are still visible on the landscape of today.

During the 19th century, as the landscape of the rest of southern New England was transformed by industrialization, Middletown remained rural. This was partially because many of the new summer colonists looked at the town as a sanctuary from the pressures that affected the industrial cities. Artists and businessmen became neighbors with thriving farmers along Indian Avenue, Paradise Avenue, Miantonomi Avenue and elsewhere.

The growth of Newport's summer colony after the Civil War resulted in an effort, spearheaded by Eugene Sturtevant, to make Middletown the "court end of the island." Roads were built and lots were laid out on a large tract of land along the Sakonnet River. The Indian Avenue area was developed on a small scale, with the first purchases being made by Philadelphia and Hartford families. Several other large summer estates were built along the Sakonnet River. Additionally, a syndicate of Boston investors laid out a compound of six Shingle Style houses, known as the Land Trust Cottages, at the eastern end of Easton's Beach in 1886-1887 under the guidance of Frederick Law Olmstead, one of America's outstanding landscape architects.

The twentieth century brought the growing importance of the Navy in Middletown, especially during and after World War II. At that time, much of Middletown's Narragansett Bay shoreline came under Navy control. Coddington Cove became a port for a North Atlantic Squadron, and the hills above it were transformed from centuries old farmland into facilities for the Naval Underwater Systems Center. The population growth that accompanied these changes generated further residential and commercial developments, such as the Anchorage, the Naval Gardens and the strip development along lower East and West Main Roads.

In the 1940s and 1950s, Middletown was the fastest growing town in Rhode Island. Between 1950 and 1960, the town's population grew by 72 percent; to a total of 12,675. Much of the town's suburban style subdivision development and strip commercial development occurred during this time period, replacing the agricultural use of these properties. When the Cruiser -Destroyer Force, Atlantic, established itself at the Naval Base during the 1960's, the population of Middletown

reached an all-time high of 29,290 people in 1970. When the Cruiser-Destroyer Force was withdrawn in 1973, the town's population saw a precipitous drop and by 1980 was 17,216.

The decline of fleet activities at Coddington Cove continued in the 1990s, with the last frigate leaving in 1994. Partially filling in the gap the U.S. Coast Guard has assigned several buoy tenders to Coddington Cove. Navy reorganization expanded the facilities at the renamed Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC). During this same period, the town began to enjoy economic prosperity. The expanding tourism industry in Newport led to an increase in hotel and motels in the town. Commercial and residential development continued a steady growth into the 2000's.

As a result of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) 2005 actions, which include consolidation of educational and training activities, Naval Station Newport experienced some growth as training commands were relocated to Newport. The modest residential development that has occurred over the past decade has been dominated by large-lot single-family dwelling development. The Town has adopted conservation subdivision development regulations which promote the preservation of open space, as well as cultural and historic resources by allowing development on smaller lots in exchange for the preserved areas. Commercial development has continued within the town's business districts, including along West Main Road, East Main Road, Aquidneck Avenue, and Valley Road. The town is beginning to experience more redevelopment of existing commercial properties as the availability of undeveloped commercial properties has declined. In addition to other zoning requirements, the Town has adopted commercial development design standards that will guide development and redevelopment of commercial properties. The regulations are intended to mitigate the adverse aesthetic impact of commercial development by encouraging the use of traditional New England architectural styles and materials, and requiring thoughtful site design.

Inventory of Cultural Resources

The cultural resources of Middletown include:

- Many historic private and public buildings as shown in Map C-1 Historic and Archeological Resources;
- Farms and their traditional use of the land;
- The stone walls which trace the boundaries of farmer's fields;
- The strong religious and ethnic traditions of the town;
- The cemeteries shown in Map C-1 Historic and Archeological Resources with their gravestones that document the lives of our forebears, and;
- The organizations which preserve our history, our open spaces, and educational facilities.

SOME SPECIFIC AREAS OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL INTEREST WITHIN THE TOWN OF MIDDLETOWN ARE DESCRIBED BELOW:

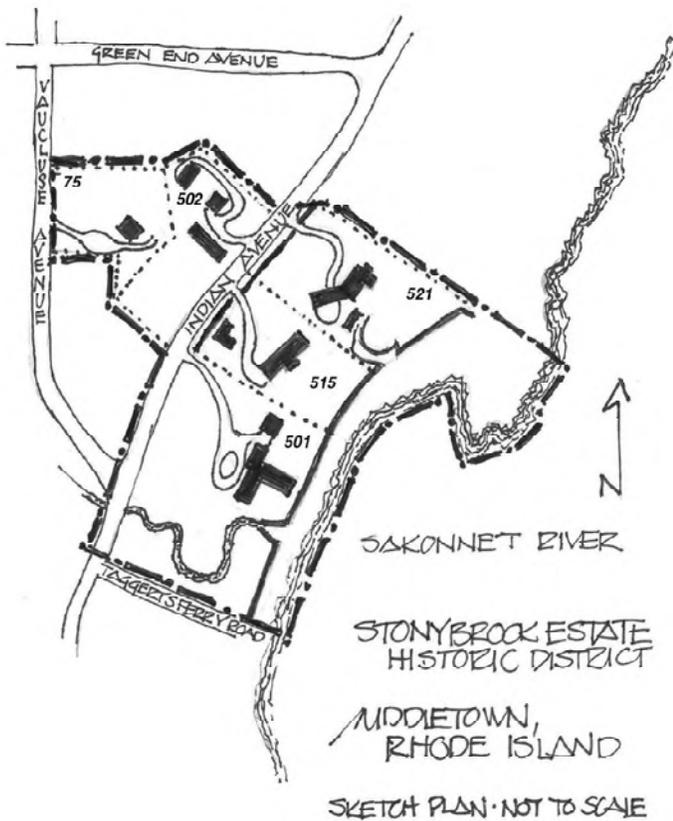
- **Indian Avenue** in the eastern part of Middletown along the Sakonnet River encompassing a one-quarter-mile section of winding, tree-lined, and relatively quiet road between Green End Avenue on the north and Third Beach Road on the south are located about a dozen noteworthy Late Victorian and early 20th-century summerhouses and a picturesque stone chapel erected in 1884. Most of the houses are situated east of the road and offer views of the river and ocean.
- At the northwest corner of Wyatt Road and Mitchell's Lane is the **Mitchell's Lane Historic Site**, about 125 acres of farmland centered on a 2-1/2 story, late Victorian, cross-gable farm house and several large, wood-shingle outbuildings. The district, which includes the former Ogden Farm and small portions of adjacent farmland, is an important surviving link to Middletown's agricultural heritage.
- Along the southern part of **Paradise Avenue**, for a distance of about one mile, are several dozen residences including some noteworthy structures, most dating from the mid-19th century. To the present day, Paradise Avenue has maintained its quiet, residential character, unaffected by modern intrusions; and its many fine, early homes are an important part of Middletown's history.
- In the south-central part of Middletown north of Second Beach, the Paradise Rocks Historic area is a largely undeveloped area of generally north-south trending rock ridges, including **Paradise Rocks and Hanging Rocks**. On an island devoted largely to agricultural, residential, commercial, and industrial uses, the Paradise Rocks area is a superb and unique natural enclave. In the 18th century, Bishop George Berkeley made frequent visits by carriage to Paradise and Hanging Rocks while living in Middletown and was said to have written 'Alciphron', one of his best known works.
- Along West Main Road, at the town line, partly in Middletown and partly in Portsmouth, is **Prescott Farm**. The property, developed by the Newport Restoration Foundation, comprises a group of restored buildings, including a house, a small building once used as a guardhouse, a country store, a windmill in Middletown and the Overing House in Portsmouth.
- In the northwest part of Middletown, along both sides of West Main Road and part of **Greene Lane**, is a rural tract centered on several old farms. This area, with its farm complexes and undulating fields bounded by stone walls, is one of the few surviving agricultural areas on the island.

- **“Whitehall”**, the home of Bishop George Berkeley from 1729-1731, the Anglo-Irish philosopher, located on Berkeley Avenue, now a museum house.
- Green End, now known as **Card's Redoubt** (1778): the remains of an earthwork in a pine grove at the rear of 218 Boulevard marks the site of MacKenzie's Green End or Card's Redoubt, once part of a line of defenses built by the British in 1778 around Newport.
- Jutting out into the Atlantic Ocean, is a slightly elevated, rocky peninsula, known as **Sachuest**. It was an island at the end of the last ice age, but currents deposited sand and gravel that created Second Beach and Third Beach and connected the island to the mainland. The peninsula is owned by the federal government and is now known as the Sachuest Point Wildlife Refuge and offers a visitors center and trails.
- **Purgatory Chasm** is a natural chasm, or cleft, in the cliffs along Sachuest Bay. The opening in the conglomerate rock ledge is about 10 feet wide, 50 feet deep, and 120 feet long. Purgatory is of geological importance because the chasm is a good example of erosion due to wave action and because of the conglomerate beds, of "stretched pebbles and boulders", which were flattened and elongated by compression millions of years ago. Initials and dates inscribed in a layer of sandstone, dating from the 18th century, indicate that Purgatory was known from an early time.
- A sinuous mound of earth and a grassy open area with a steep slope to the east, mark the site of **Redoubt St. Onge**, a Revolutionary War defense work. Colonial and French troops constructed the redoubt in 1780 to protect the French, under Rochambeau, from an attack by English forces out of New York.
- **Naval Undersea Warfare Center** at Coddington Cove (buildings 103, 105, 107, 111, and 131) includes several structures built during and after World War II, including the former Newport Airport Hanger; research, development, testing and evaluation buildings; and support buildings. Many of these are bombproof structures of massive reinforced-concrete construction with heavy overhanging roof projections.
- **The Old Colony Railroad** which runs along the west side of the town provided both freight and passenger service up until the collapse of the Fall River Line Steamship Company and the competition offered by trucks. It is a valuable, one of a kind feature, and besides its importance as a cultural resource it is also a transportation asset that should be maintained.
- **The Peckham Bros. Quarry**, the only active quarry in Middletown, has been operated by the Peckham family since 1844 and is one of the oldest operating quarries in the United States. It is located in an area generally known as Paradise Rocks, where stones and gravel had been taken for paving roads as early as 1701.

- The **Crystal Spring** is a natural spring that has provided drinking water to the residents of Middletown since 1907.
- The "**mile marker**" at **Two Mile Corner**.

National Register of Historic Places

Buildings in Middletown which are listed on the National Register of Historic Places are highlighted below. The National Register of Historic Places is a program of the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. It is the official inventory of the nation's cultural and historical resources that are worthy of preservation. The National Register is more than a list of resources that have been researched and documented as significant to the nation, state or community. The register is also a tool for preserving historic properties as listed properties are given special consideration when the federal government is planning or giving aid to projects. Listing on the National Register also gives private citizens and public officials credibility when attempting to protect these resources. Listing does not however prevent a private citizen from altering, managing or disposing of the property.



WHITEHALL, 311 Berkeley Avenue, was the home of Bishop George Berkeley, educator, philosopher and Anglican cleric, from 1729-1731. It is an example of early use of Palladian style architecture on a domestic building. The home is now a museum and is furnished for the time and includes a colonial herb garden and orchard. The mission of The Whitehall Committee of The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America is to preserve, protect, interpret and keep the home as a perpetual memorial.

The **WITHERBEE SCHOOL**, a one-room wooden school house at the corner of Green End and Valley was one of five in Middletown in 1900. It closed in the 1940s, and now is run by the Middletown Historical Society as an educational center. The site was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1989. This circa 1892 one-room schoolhouse was fully restored into an authentic vintage 1900 classroom.

STONYBROOK ESTATE HISTORIC DISTRICT includes the late Gothic Revival house built in 1928 by Horace Trumbauer. The district was added to the National Register of

Historic Places in 2009. Properties included in the district are 501 Indian Avenue - Stonybrook Estate (1927), Grounds & Garage, 502 Indian Avenue - Stonybrook Cottage, 515 Indian Avenue - Stonybrook Gatehouse, 521 Indian Avenue - Stonybrook Grounds, and 75 Vacluse - Stonybrook Gardners Cottage.

HAMILTON HOPPIN HOUSE at 120 Miantonomi Avenue is said to be the first Italianate Stick-Style house in the United States. It was built in 1856 as a summer residence for Hamilton Hoppin (1821-1885) and has been known by several names, including Villalon, Montpelier, Shadow Lawn, Agincourt Inn, and, currently, The Inn at Villalon. The oldest part of the house was designed by architect Richard Upjohn, as was Kingscote in Newport. The Hamilton Hoppin House was added to the National Historic Register in 1996.

THE TAYLOR CHASE SMYTHE HOUSE on Chases Lane is a circa 1702 two and a half story Rhode Island Plan structure with additions. The Navy purchased the house in 1941 and utilized it as the Naval Education and Training Center. The house was added to the register in 1989.

DENNIS J. MURPHY HOUSE AT OGDEN FARM is a 1900 vernacular Queen Anne farmhouse at 641 Mitchell's Lane. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2007.

PARADISE SCHOOL, a one room schoolhouse on Paradise Avenue, was built in 1875 and held classes until 1955 when it became an administration office. The Middletown Historical Society acquired the building in 1976. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978, was later restored and now holds a small museum.

BOYD'S WINDMILL, built in 1810, is an historic smock mill. John Peterson built the windmill on Old Mill Lane in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, and William Boyd purchased it in 1815. It originally had four common sails, but four more were added by the family. The windmill was restored by the Middletown Historical Society after receiving it as a donation in 1990 and moving it to Paradise Valley Park in Middletown. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2001.

The **CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE, LITTLE CHAPEL, AND MEMORIAL SCHOOLHOUSE** are located on the campus of St George's School at 372 Purgatory Road. St George's School, founded in 1896, is a private, independent, Episcopal, boarding school. The Gothic cathedral was build in 1928 and the adjoining Memorial Schoolhouse in 1923. The three sites were added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2004.

PARADISE FARM is a coastal farm located at 583 Third Beach Road of about 130 acres comprising a mid-18th century farmhouse with later additions, a mid-19th-century barn, two modest scale agricultural outbuildings, two burial sites, a stone-lined sheep pen, stone-lined pastures and fields, wooded areas, Hanging Rock (a wellknown geological formation), and an abandoned bluestone quarry. It is bounded by Third Beach Road and Hanging Rock Road on the east, the rear lot lines of neighboring properties on the north and west, and Hanging Rock Road and Gardiner's

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Pond on the south. As specified in the will of Mabel Norman Cerio, the last private owner of Paradise Farm, much of the estate was given to the Norman Bird Sanctuary Trust for use as a bird sanctuary in 1949. Named in honor of Cerio's father and brother, the non-profit Norman Bird Sanctuary continues to serve as a wildlife refuge and education center today. At the time of Cerio's death, a 16-acre parcel comprising the Paradise Farmhouse, outbuildings and agricultural fields along Third Beach Road remained in the hands of the Norman heirs. In the late 1990s, The Norman Bird Sanctuary purchased this parcel and reintegrated it into the sanctuary.

The **CLAMBAKE CLUB OF NEWPORT** is an historic clubhouse meeting hall at 353 Tuckerman Avenue. The building was completed in the mid-19th century and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1995.

The **LYMAN C. JOSEPH HOUSE** at 438 Wolcott Avenue was built in 1882. The home, designed by architect Clarence Luce, is in an American shingle style and is currently privately owned. The home was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

BAILEY FARM is an historic farm at 373 Wyatt Road that was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. Bailey Farm was built in the early nineteenth century as an excellent example of Greek Revival architecture.

GARDINER POND SHELL MIDDEN, contains various prehistoric shell fossils and other archaeological remains. The midden was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1985.

Map C-1 Historic Sites, Cemeteries and Archeological Resources displays sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places within Middletown as well as historic cemeteries and archeological sites.

In addition to the buildings which are on the National Register there are many other buildings in Middletown which are of historic or architectural interest. For a full list of Historic Buildings and other cultural resources, see *Historic and Architectural Resources of Middletown, Rhode Island: A Preliminary Report*, Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1979, and *Middletown, Rhode Island: Houses – History – Heritage*, The Middletown Historical Society, 1990.

Inventory of Historic Landscapes

Historic Landscapes of Rhode Island, published in 2002 by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, includes an inventory of individual historic landscapes by community in Rhode Island featuring both the designed and the vernacular. Within the town of Middletown, the following individual landscapes were identified:

- Rhode Island Nurseries, 644 East Main Road
- Gray Craig, 1924-28, 75 Gray Craig Road

- Green End Avenue Agricultural Landscape- 3 Farms at 1498 Green End Avenue, 1499 Green End Avenue, & Howland Avenue
- Sonnenhof, 1914-1919, 14 Indian Avenue
- Hopelands, 1927-1930, 165 Indian Avenue
- Stonybrook, 1928, 500 Indian Avenue
- Mitchell Lane Rural Landscape – Chapman Farm (373 Mitchell’s Lane), James Smith Farm (798 Mitchell’s Lane), Ogden Farm (Mitchell’s Lane & Wyatt Road)
- St George’s School , 1902, 372 Purgatory Road
- Lazy Lawn, Angell Cottage, 1842, 528 Third Beach Road
- King-Norman Farm, 583 Third Beach Road
- West Main Road Agricultural Landscape - Middletown’s Northwest Corner – Coggeshall-Simmons Farm

Cultural Institutions

Cultural institutions in Middletown include churches, schools and nonprofit organizations. These include the Middletown Public Library, the Norman Bird Sanctuary, the Middletown Historical Society, the Newport County YMCA, the Potter League, the Sachuest Point Wildlife Refuge, The Grange, and many others.

The Middletown Historical Society is an all-volunteer, non-profit educational organization, founded in 1976. The Society's purpose is to “bring together those people interested in Middletown's history and to safeguard our rapidly disappearing heritage in order to insure a record of the past.” Accordingly, the Middletown Historical Society has undertaken a series of preservation projects. One of the newest projects is the Middletown War Veteran’s Memorial Park. Situated on land graciously donated by the estate of the late Ray Durfee at the corner of Green End Avenue and Valley Road (RI 214), the Society is designing a memorial park to honor Middletown’s War Veterans. Preliminary plans include a small parking area, a memorial brick walkway, an illuminated flag pole and a permanent monument listing the names of those veteran’s who made the ultimate sacrifice in the defense of their country.

Historic Cemeteries

The State of Rhode Island's historic cemetery program, which is administered through the Department of Veterans Affairs, lists approximately 40 historic cemeteries in Middletown. The Middletown Historical Society has identified 74 historic cemeteries that are described in Philip Michael O’Shea’s book *Death Comes Once But a Cemetery is Forever; The Search For Middletown’s Lost Graveyards*. The Middletown Planning staff crosschecked and verified, using aerial photography, both the State’s inventory and O’Shea’s list for completeness and accuracy. Of those sites, 54 historic cemeteries were identified in the Town. Map C-1 Cultural & Historic Resources

displays the location of all historic cemeteries in Middletown. Some of the missing lots were either moved or no longer exist.

The gravestones in the cemeteries of Middletown are often the only informative artifact left about an individual or family that gives both the date of birth, the date of death and often indicates to whom an individual was married. Furthermore, the decorations, which often adorn these stones, are a form of American folk art. Cemeteries and the stones they contain, therefore, are powerful documents about Middletown's past.

While statutes and laws exist on both the local and state levels to protect the cemeteries on the state's inventory, enforcement, maintenance and access to these sites remain a problem. The town should establish an adopt-a-spot program for historic cemeteries that are without a perpetual care program. A well-organized and coordinated volunteer effort employ, for example, Boy Scouts might also be effective.

American Revolution Sites

The two primary fortifications left in Middletown are Green End Fort and Redoubt St. Onge. The Green End Fort is located off the Boulevard near Green End Avenue, and Redoubt St. Onge (mislabelled as Green End Fort by a monument at the site) is located at the end of Vernon Avenue.

There are a significant number of sites in Middletown still remaining from the line of defense thrown up around Newport by the British during their occupation of the Island in the American Revolution. These were later reworked and added to by both the French and the Americans and, as such, are of great historic significance. The potential for education is so high at both sites that these remaining fortifications must be protected from destruction either by erosion or by development. The Town should take a lead role in providing protection. Zoning regulations should be enacted to prevent any destruction of these nationally significant places.

The Paradise Loop Scenic Highway

Paradise Avenue, Berkeley Avenue, Wyatt Road, Mitchell's Lane, Wapping Road, Peckham Avenue, Indian Avenue and Hanging Rock Road in Middletown comprise the 8.3 mile scenic highway network. This network of roads traverses an area of natural beauty, historic significance, recreational opportunity, and cultural importance. The scenic loop passes through a variety of landscapes, from the shoreline of Second Beach and Sachuest Bay, to historic residences along Indian Avenue, to gently rolling farmland all punctuated by stretches of canopy trees, stone walls and open vistas. Several natural resource attractions mark destination points along or near the loop, including the Norman Bird Sanctuary, Sachuest Point National Wildlife Refuge, and Purgatory Chasm. *The Paradise Loop Scenic Highway Stewardship Plan* produced by the Rhode Island Scenic Highways Board in 2003 identifies how citizens and government can work to protect, manage, and enhance this scenic highway so that future travelers through Middletown, including bicyclists and pedestrians, will be able to experience the history and scenery that is evident to today's roadway users.

Cultural & Historic Resources - Goals, Policies, & Action Items

Goal C-I: Save National Register and other historically or architecturally significant properties and natural heritage sites

Policies	Action Items	Responsible Department	Timeframe
C-I.A. Preserve historic buildings of Middletown	C-I.A.1. Adopt ordinances to require historically correct restoration of historic buildings and to discourage demolition or inappropriate use of valuable historic resources	Town Council; Planning Board	Short-term (1-2 years)
	C-I.A.2. Seek National Register of Historic Places nomination of additional historic resources on town properties, as appropriate	Planning Department	Ongoing
	C-I.A.3. Consider adoption of incentive program to encourage the preservation of historically significant buildings	Town Council	Medium-term (3-5 years)
	C-I.A.4. Develop and maintain an inventory of National Register and other historically or architecturally significant properties	Planning Department	Short-term (1-2 years)
C-I.B. Protect and preserve historic cemeteries and other archeological sites	C-I.B.1. Establish an adopt-a-spot program for historic cemeteries and burial grounds	Town Council	Medium-term (3-5 years)
	C-I.B.2. Develop an ordinance to provide protection of archeological sites and military fortifications	Planning Board; Town Council	Long-term (6-10+ years)

GOAL C-II: Preserve historic landscapes

Policies	Action Items	Responsible Department	Timeframe
C-II.A. Preserve the town's historic landscapes, including farms and agricultural land	C-II.A.1. Partner with other governmental and private funding sources to purchase development rights to farms and other areas of traditional use of the land	Town Administrator; Town Council; Open Space & Fields Committee	Ongoing
	C-II.A.2. Develop zoning and subdivision standards and incentives for the preservation of open space, greenways, agricultural land, and scenic vistas as part of the development process	Planning Board; Town Council	Medium-term (3-5 years)
C-II.B. Protect and preserve the hand-built stone walls which delineate fields	C-II.B.1. Enforce the Town's Stone Wall Ordinance	Building & Zoning	Ongoing
	C-II.B.2. Protect historic stone walls through Development Plan Review and Conservation Development design processes	Planning Board	Ongoing

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GOAL C-III: Share historic resources and make history and culture a vital part of the community			
Policies	Action Items	Responsible Department	Timeframe
C-III.A. Preserve historic record and documentary history of the town	C-III.A.1. Identify and document historically significant structures, including those structures built in more recent years which may have architectural or historical significance	Planning Department; Town Clerk	Long-term (6-10+ years)
	C-III.A.2. Maintain and update surveys of the town’s architectural resources	Planning Department	Ongoing
	C-III.A.3. Preserve historic documents, photos, and records	Town Clerk	Ongoing
	C-III.A.4. Conserve, photograph, and document any recognized Town cultural and/or historical resources, including documentary resources that are in imminent jeopardy of being altered or demolished	Town Clerk; Planning Department	Ongoing
	C-III.A.5. Partner with organizations, such as the Middletown Historical Society and the Preservation Society of Newport County to promote the continued preservation of historical resources	Planning Department; Town Administrator	Long-term (6-10+ years)
C-III.B. Preserve and promote cultural institutions in Middletown	C-III.B.1. Continue to sponsor valued community activities and events	Town Council	Ongoing