

CULTURAL and HISTORICAL RESOURCES

II: Cultural and Historical Resources

CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL RESOURCES

BACKGROUND

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Founded in 1743, Middletown's history goes back well before its formal incorporation. The Wampanoag and Narragansett Indians had already established the agricultural character of the area, for they used slash and burn techniques to clear land for the corn they planted during the summer. With the coming of English settlement, much of the area would become the Town of Middletown and was laid out as farms for the leaders of the new settlement in Newport. Nicholas Easton, for example, was granted hundreds of acres along Easton's Point and Second Beach.

One of the highest priorities in Newport's first year of settlement was to establish a "public" school. The schoolmaster was the Rev. Robert Lenthal. Funds for his school came from profits of the "wood land" (in what became Middletown after 1743), and from property closer to the center of Newport proper. The wooded land produced timber, fuel, and, when cleared, pasture land.

The rural character of Middletown appealed to many for a variety of reasons. Bishop George Berkeley, the Anglo-Irish philosopher, bought a 96-acre tract of Middletown farmland while he waited funding from Parliament for a university he planned to establish in Bermuda. Middletown's rural countryside also appealed to Newport merchants, many of whom built "summer estates" in the area, some of which still exist today.

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.

In December 1776 about 9000 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 4 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 due to the fact that 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.

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**** Insert discussion of cultural/ethnic influences on the town's development**

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The twentieth century brought the growing importance of the Navy in Middletown, especially 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 nonagricultural developments, such as the Anchorage, the Naval Gardens and the strip development along lower East and West Main Roads.

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The 1990's saw a decline of fleet activities at Coddington Cove and the last frigate left in 1994. Filling in the gap the U.S. Coast Guard has assigned several buoy tenders to Coddington Cove. At the same time Navy reorganization expanded the facilities at the renamed Naval Undersea Warfare Center (NUWC).

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During this same period, the town witnessed increased commercial development. The, expanding tourism industry in Newport, led to a rise in hotel/motels in the town. Residential development continued a steady increase into the 2000's.

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INVENTORY

The cultural resources of Middletown are inextricably woven into the landscape, which surrounds the town, and are critically important in determining the essential character of the entire town. Included are:

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- Many historic private and public buildings([figure 1](#));
- A dwindling number of 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 ([figure 2](#)) with their gravestones that document the lives of our forebears, and;
- The organizations which preserve our history, our open spaces, and educational facilities.

The cultural resources of Middletown have never before been properly addressed in any long-range planning effort by either the town itself or by the state. In the past, cultural resources have been subsumed under headings such as recreation, land use, or briefly addressed in the short history of the community which prefaces so many planning documents. By giving them a low priority in the past, the town has lost far too many of these resources and many now realize that, as a result, part of the essential character of Middletown has been lost as well.

In addition to these buildings which are on the National Register already, there are many other buildings in Middletown which meet the criteria for inclusion, but, for a variety of reasons, have not yet been nominated. For a list of these buildings, see Appendix I.

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The buildings that are on or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places are only a fraction of the historically significant buildings in Middletown. While these other buildings may not have national significance, they are, nevertheless, important cultural resources and should be protected. 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](#).

For the purposes of future surveys of these important cultural resources and for documenting and illustrating those buildings known to be of historic significance, see the collections of the Middletown Historical Society, the Newport Historical Society and the Rhode Island Historical Society.

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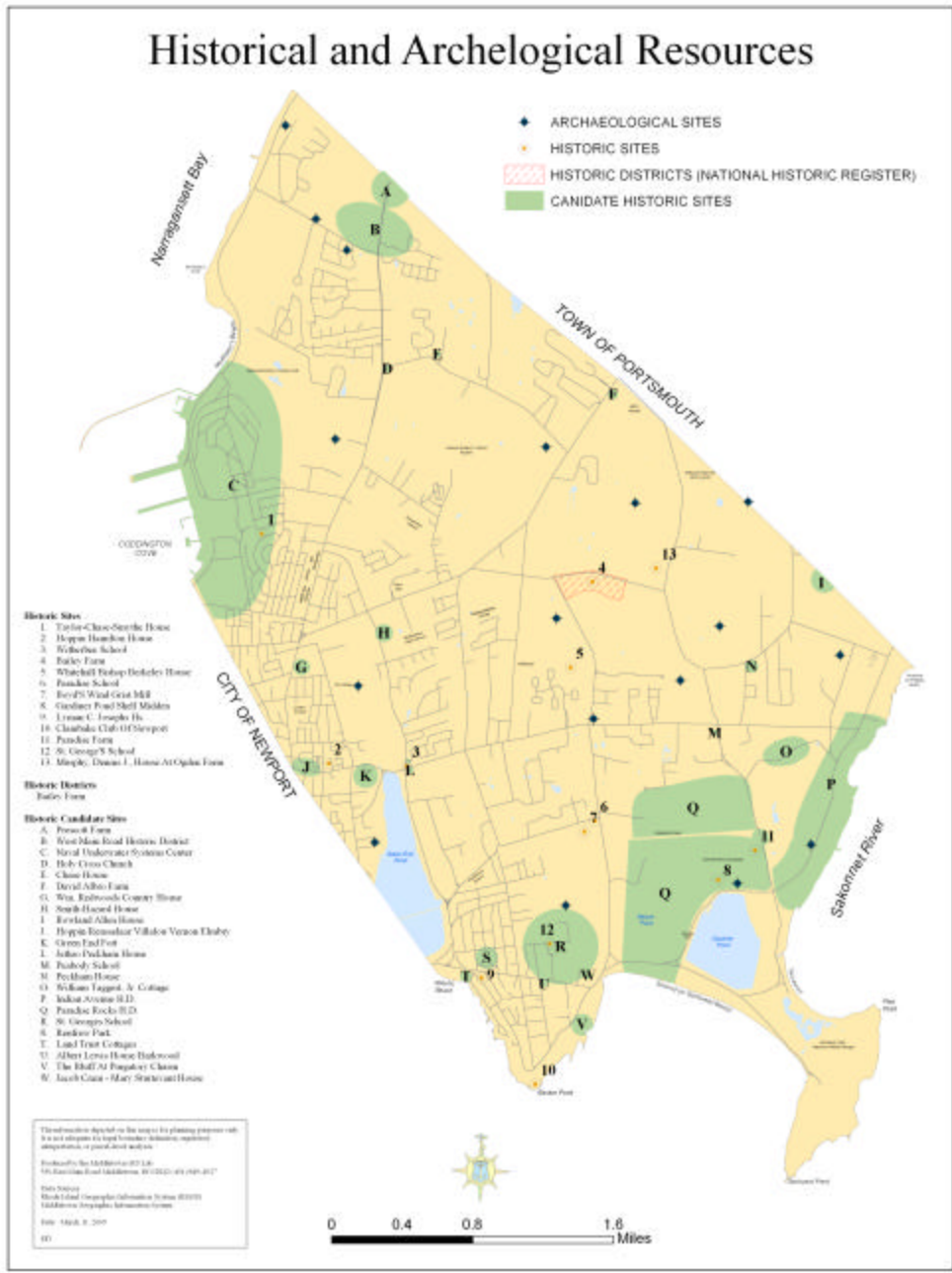
The National Register of Historic Places is a record maintained by the National Park Service within the United States Department of the Interior. It includes structures, sites, areas, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture. It is the official inventory of the nation's cultural and historical resources that are worthy of preservation. All properties nominated to the Register must be reviewed and approved by the National Park Service. Thus, buildings which are either on the Register or have been determined to be eligible for nomination by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission are cultural resources which have an importance beyond the local level. The National Register can be used as a tool for prioritizing the significance of some of Middletown's cultural resources.

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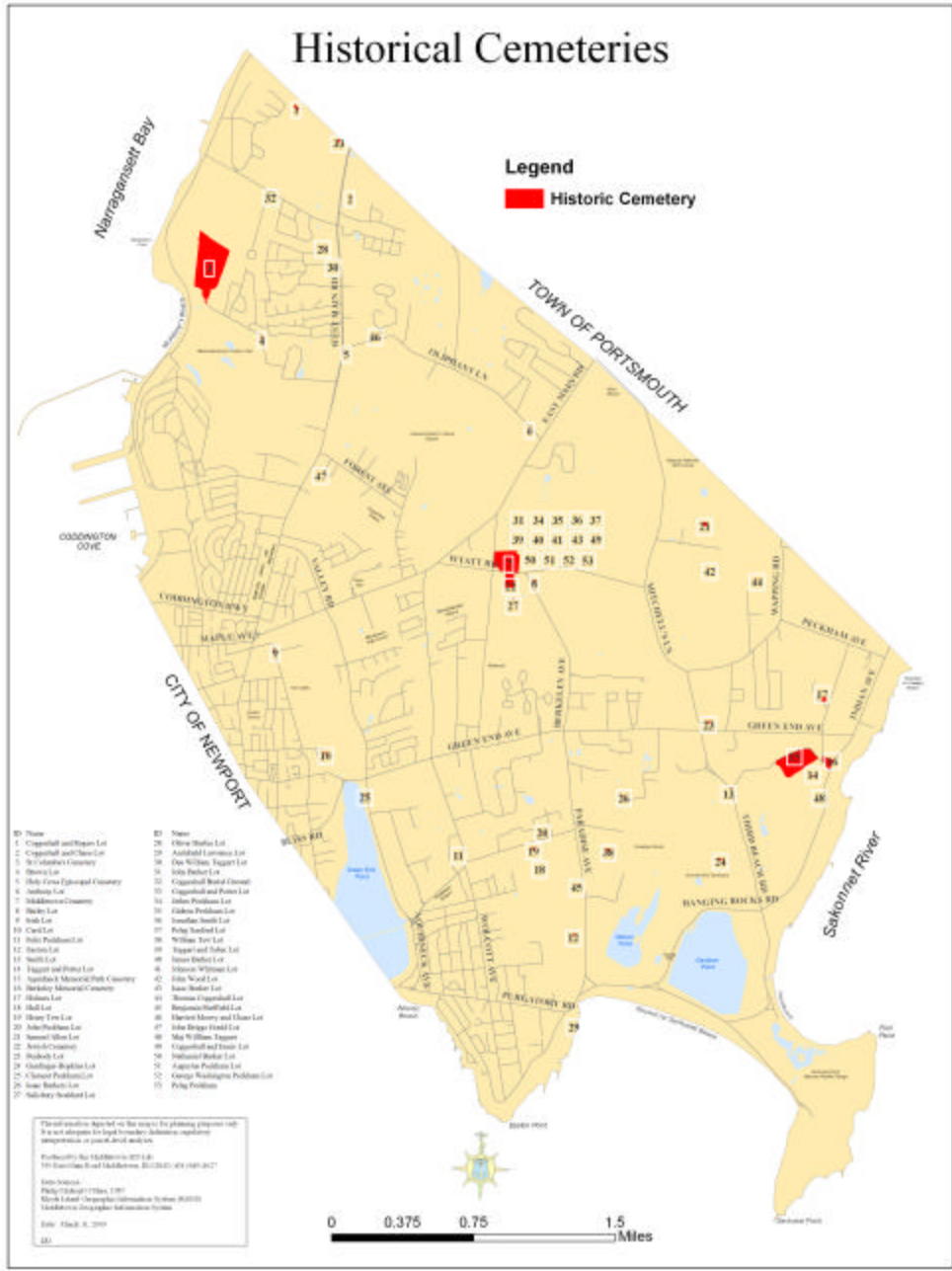
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Figure 1: Historic/Archeological Resources

II: Cultural and Historical Resources



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Figure 2: Historic Cemeteries

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Appendix I HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURALLY IMPORTANT BUILDINGS

Peckham Avenue

Elisha Clare Peckham House (1868), "Seven Pines"

Indian Avenue

Mary B. Behrend Estate - 15 Indian Avenue

The Old Chase House or Sachuest Lodge (c. 1870) - 49 Indian Avenue

"Hopelands" (1930) - 165 Indian Avenue

House - 195 Indian Avenue

Coit-Conover House (1888) - 208 Indian Avenue

House - 255 Indian Avenue

House - 267 Indian Avenue

Edwin Booth House "Boothden" (1883) - 357 Indian Avenue

St. Columba's Chapel (1884)

Summer Estate - 500 Indian Avenue

Summer Estate supporting buildings - 502 Indian Avenue

J. T. Huntington House - 561 Indian Avenue

R. W. Peckham House - 786 Indian Avenue

Vaocluse Avenue

William Taggart, Jr. Cottage (c. 1750)

Paradise Avenue

John Barker House (c. 1850) - 246 Paradise Avenue

Paradise School (1876)

House - 347 Paradise Avenue

William Smith House "Homestead" (1864) - 380 Paradise Avenue

Stephen P. Barker House "Sea Breeze Farm" (c.1870) - 432 Paradise Avenue

Isaac Barker House (c. 1860) - 478 Paradise Avenue

Bridge House (1930)

E. Truman Peckham House "Greyledge Farm" (c.1870) - 532 Paradise Avenue

Paradise Farm - 346 Paradise Avenue

Gray Craig

Ward's Farm, now the Ward-Barker House - 89 Paradise Avenue

Berkeley Avenue

Bishop George Berkeley Farm "Whitehall", (1729)

Third Beach Road

Allen-King-Norman House "Paradise Farm" (c. 1875)

Norman Bird Sanctuary and Museum

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Samuel G. Arnold House - "Lazy Lawn" (1843) - 528 Third Beach Rd.

Peckham-Brown House - 233 Third Beach Road

Peabody School (1794)

Taggart Ferry House "Ogeedankee" (c.1740)

Bailey Avenue

Peckham House - 89 Bailey Avenue

Rowe House (1982)

Baldwin Road

Peckham House - "Orchard Hill Farm" 6 Baldwin Road

Bliss Mine Road

Francis Talbot House

Brown's Lane

Brown House - 371 Brown's Lane

Chase Lane

Taylor-Chase-Smythe House (c. 1702)

Continental Drive

"Mariemount" Gardener's Cottage (c. 1885) - 37 Continental Drive

East Main Road

Frosty Freeze

Middletown Town Hall (1885, 1940)

Aquidneck Grange Number Thirty, P. of H. (1935)

Rhode Island Nurseries Stable/barn

A. Anthony House - 644 East Main Road

Ioshua Anthony House

Floradale Motor Court (now "Sandpiper") (1929)

Manchester-Albro House - 1105 East Main Road

Slate Hill Farm

David Albro Farm - 1219 East Main Road

Isaac Sherman House - 1228 East Main Road

Tommy's Diner

Forest Avenue

Air Control Tower, Colonel Robert F. Wood Airpark, Forest Avenue

Quonset House, Forest Avenue

Green End Avenue

Hillside Farm (c. 1850) - 178 Green End Avenue

Witherbee School (c. 1892) (National Register)

Jethro Peckham House (c. 1850) - 167 Green End Avenue

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"Mariemont" (c. 1876) - 386 Green End Avenue

House - 488 Green End Avenue

Berkeley School

Robinson-Barker House (c. 1840) - 1226 Green End Avenue

Barker-Congdon House (c. 1850)

Boy's Club (1908)

Greene Lane

George Coggeshall House - 140 Greene Lane

Coggeshall Farm (1725) - 121 Greene Lane

Howland Avenue

William Taggart, Jr. Cottage

Jepson Lane

Mini Green Animals - 504 Jepson Lane

John Spooner Farm - 704 Jepson Lane

P. Anthony Farm - 739 Jepson Lane

Judith Court

Pardon Brown House - 2 Judith Court

Kane Avenue

Judge Henry W. Bookstaver House "Wyn Wic" (1885)

Russell Nevins, Jr. House

James Knowles House

Miantonomi Avenue

William Vernon House "Elmhvrst" (1833)

Hamilton Hoppin House "Shadow Lawn" (1856-57)

Alexander Van Rensselaer House "Restmere" (c. 1858)

Mitchell Lane

James Smith House "Pennfield Farm" (c. 1850) - 798 Mitchell Lane

House - 408 Mitchell's Lane

Morrison Avenue

House - 81 Morrison Avenue

Oliphant Lane

Chase House (1742) - 88 Oliphant Lane

Daniel Chase House - 146 Oliphant Lane

House - 201 Oliphant Lane

House - 484 Oliphant Lane

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<u>William Peckham House (c. 1750) - 41 Prospect Avenue</u>	Formatted: Heading4, Hyphenate, Tabs: Not at -3 ch
<u>House - 98 Prospect Avenue</u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u>E. M. Peckham House - 145 Prospect Avenue</u>	Formatted: Left, Hyphenate, Tabs: Not at -3 ch
<u><i>Renfrew Park</i></u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u>12 houses</u>	Formatted: Heading4, Hyphenate, Tabs: Not at -3 ch
<u><i>Second Beach Road (Purgatory Road)</i></u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u>Land Trust Cottages (1887-1888)</u>	Formatted: Left, Hyphenate, Tabs: Not at -3 ch
<u>A. R. Wheeler House - N.E. corner of Kane Avenue</u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u>St. George's School</u>	Formatted: Heading4, Hyphenate, Tabs: Not at -3 ch
<u>"Ashurst" (c. 1907)- corner of Ashurst Lane</u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u>Jacob Cram House-Mary Sturtevant House (1871-72)</u>	Formatted: Left, Hyphenate, Tabs: Not at -3 ch
<u>Johnny's House of Seafood (1936)</u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u><i>Shore Drive</i></u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u>Cliff Cottage - 63 Shore Drive</u>	Formatted: ... [28]
<u><i>Tuckerman Avenue</i></u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u>General Zachariah C. Deas House "Sea View Villa" (1881) – 333 Tuckerman Avenue</u>	Formatted: ... [29]
<u>The Clambake Club</u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u>Whetstone - 455 Tuckerman Avenue</u>	Formatted: ... [30]
<u>The Bluff, formerly the John Bancroft House - 575 Tuckerman Avenue</u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u>House - 593 Tuckerman Avenue</u>	Formatted: ... [31]
<u><i>Turner Road</i></u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u>Calvary Methodist Church (1963)</u>	Formatted: ... [32]
<u><i>Valley Road</i></u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u>Smith-Hazard House - 124 Valley Road</u>	Formatted: ... [33]
<u>The Kempenaar Clambake Club, Valley Road</u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u><i>Wapping Road</i></u>	Formatted: ... [34]
<u>Farm - 1078 Wapping Road</u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u>Joel Peckham House (1875) - 1416 Wapping Road</u>	Formatted: ... [35]
<u>House - 1446 Wapping Road</u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u><i>West Main Road</i></u>	Formatted: ... [36]
<u>House - 28 West Main Road</u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u>Guild House (1907) next to Holy Cross Church</u>	Formatted: ... [37]
<u>Church of the Holy Cross (1845)</u>	Formatted: Font: 10 pt
<u>Oliphant School (1882)</u>	Formatted: ... [38]
<u>Building - 1521 West Main Rd. formerly Middletown Free Library</u>	Formatted: ... [39]
<u>House - 1634 West Main Road</u>	Deleted: Comp ... [40]
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Taggart House - 1748 West Main Road

Former Town Clerk's Office

Joshua Coggeshall House and Farm (c. 1850)- 1777 West Main Road

James Coggeshall III House "Paramount Farm" (1800)- 1903 West Main Road

Coggeshall-Simmons House and Farm (c. 1816) 1942 West Main Road

Middletown Town Library, West Main Road

The Newport Creamery, West Main Road

William Redwood's Country House (c.1745)– 379 West Main Road

Wolcott Ave.

Barkwood Apartments - 398 Wolcott Ave.

Lyman C. Josephs House, "Windemere" (1882-83) - 438 Wolcott Avenue (National Register)

Charlotte Miller House - across from 489

Wyatt Road

Chapman House and Farm - 373 Wyatt Road

The Bailey Farmhouse (c. 1750) (National Register)

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POSSIBLE HISTORIC DISTRICTS

- Indian Avenue Historic District: 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. Here 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 east of the road, their well-sited lots affording good views of the river and ocean.
- Mitchell Lane Rural Historic District: at the northwest corner of Wyatt Road and Mitchell Lane is the Mitchell Lane Historic District, 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.
- Paradise Avenue Historic District: 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.
- Paradise Rocks Historic District: in the south-central part of Middletown north of Second Beach, the Paradise Rocks Historic District 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.
- Prescott Farm Historic District: along West Main Road, at the town line, partly in Middletown and partly in Portsmouth, is the Prescott Farm. The property, as extensively developed over the past decade 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.
- West Main Road Historic District: 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" Historic District: On Berkeley Avenue. The home of Bishop George Berkeley, the Anglo-Irish philosopher.

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PROPOSED HISTORIC SITES

- 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.
- Sachuest - in the southeast corner of Middletown belongs to the Federal Government, 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.
- Purgatory Chasm: 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.
- Redoubt St. Onge (1780): 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 Underwater Systems 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.
- Colonel Robert E. Wood Airport
- Newport Memorial Park – Howland Avenue

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THREATS TO THE CULTURAL & HISTORICAL RESOURCES OF MIDDLETOWN

The pressure on the land to accommodate growth threatens the town's rich cultural heritage.

There are other threats to the cultural resources of Middletown, however. Perhaps the most dangerous of all is when the citizens forget the significance of that which surrounds them in such abundance. Without constant reminders or restraints on our actions, there is a temptation to squander these irreplaceable resources for short-term gain.

During the 1990's, the Middletown Historical Society, the Norman Bird Sanctuary and the Aquidneck Island Land Trust began to grapple with the issues surrounding the preservation of the town's natural and cultural resources. Even where there is a desire to protect a given cultural resource, the lack of policies, codes, statutes, and laws on both the local and the state level to require preservation frustrates even the best efforts to plan for the future. For example, the development around "Whitehall", the home of Bishop George Berkeley, which was so closely linked to the town's agricultural setting, did not fully consider the question of the preservation of one of Middletown's most important cultural resources.

These inclinations to disregard the town's cultural resources must be resolved. This element identifies and inventories the very things that give people living in Middletown their special "sense of place." Our cultural resources help us define who we are in a world of ever increasing homogeneity and they should be given an extremely high priority in current planning efforts.

Following are specific threats to Middletown's heritage that will be addressed through the implementation of this plan:

- Middletown's agricultural heritage is threatened by conversion of farm land to other uses and the encroachment of incompatible uses into agricultural areas.

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GOALS, POLICIES, & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

To address the threats identified above, this plan presents a program of goals, policies and implementation measures. In general, the plan aims to meet the following goals:

- Preserve the cultural resources of Middletown in a manner consistent with its evolution and growth and place those preservation efforts high on the town's list of priorities.
- Preserve the contexts in which these resources are set through buffer areas or zones. It is often the setting where a cultural resource is located that gives added meaning to the resource itself.
- Strengthen the administrative and educational infrastructure that is necessary for the continuing preservation of these resources.

The plan establishes specific strategies to preserve resources identified in each of the categories listed below.

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II: Cultural and Historical Resources

THE CULTURAL RESOURCES OF MIDDLETOWN

Long Range planning for the cultural resources of Middletown must include inventories, objectives, and the means to implement those plans, which are consistent with the general goals, presented in this element for each of the following types of resources:

- | | |
|--|--|
| I – Historic Buildings | VII – Rights-of-Way To Cultural Resources |
| II – Historic Districts | VIII – Archaeological Sites |
| III – Contemporary Buildings | IX – Unique Features |
| <u>IV – Arms – Traditional Use of Land</u> | <u>X – Military Fortifications (Revolutionary War)</u> |
| V - Institutions | XI – Underwater Historic Resources |
| <u>VI - Cemeteries</u> | <u>XII – Stone Walls</u> |

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Deleted: <#>Prepare a comprehensive prioritized inventory of cultural resources in Middletown. This should be accomplished in partnership with the Middletown Historical Society and the Aquidneck Island Land Trust.¶
<#>The town must strongly support those town agencies and boards that prioritize the cultural and historical integrity of the town.¶
<#>Preserve the cultural resources of Middletown in a manner consistent with its evolution and growth and place those preservation efforts high on the town's list of priorities.¶
<#>Work top reserve the contexts in which these resources are set through buffer areas or zones. It is often the setting where a cultural resource is located that gives added meaning to the resource itself.¶
<#>Strengthen the administrative and educational infrastructure that is necessary for the continuing preservation of these resources.¶
<#>The Middletown Historical Society shall maintain a comprehensive listing of all historic and architecturally important buildings.¶
<#>Encourage the School Committee and the Administration, to develop curricula and programs in the schools from the first grade through high school which would educate the children of Middletown on the importance of the cultural resources inventoried herein. Programs could include class projects which would carry out some of the work necessary for the implementation of specific objectives, such as updating surveys, cleaning up historic cemeteries, helping on archeological excavations, and even repairing stone walls.¶
<#>Support the development of tours and the printing of brochures of the cultural resources for both local residents and visitors to the area. Publications describing routes of such tours could be made available at the Newport County Visitors and Convention Bureau. [41]

Deleted: <#>Maintain a local register of historic buildings as a supplement to the Middletown Historical Society book on historic homes. While this plan calls for working with the National Register of Historic Places, many cultural resources which are important for area residents are not of national significance and, therefore, will not meet the requirements of the Register.¶
<#>Develop programs to assist p... [42]

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GOALS/POLICIES/IMPLEMENTATION

Goal 1 – Historic Buildings

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
Preserve and encourage the historically correct restoration of as many historic buildings as possible.	Buildings in Middletown which are on the National Register of Historic Places are listed in TBD.	<p>In addition to these buildings which are on the National Register already, there are many other buildings in Middletown which meet the criteria for inclusion, but, for a variety of reasons, have not yet been nominated. For a list of these buildings, see Appendix 1.</p> <p>The buildings that are on or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places are only a fraction of the historically significant buildings in Middletown. While these other buildings may not have national significance, they are, nevertheless, important cultural resources and should be protected. 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.</p> <p>For the purposes of future surveys of these important cultural resources and for documenting and illustrating those buildings known to be of historic significance, see the collections of the Middletown Historical Society, the Newport Historical Society and the Rhode Island Historical Society.</p> <p>The National Register of Historic Places is a record maintained by the National Park Service within the United States Department of the Interior. It includes structures, sites,</p>	1. Develop a prioritized inventory of these structures to facilitate effective implementation of the goals and objectives in this plan	Middletown Historical Society (MHS)	Annual
			2. Nominate eligible buildings to the National Register.	MHS	

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 Comment [d6]: Remove inventory column????

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Cultural and Historical Resources

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date

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GOAL II Historic Districts

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Produce maps using the Town's GIS to locate all identified historic buildings. 2. Designate a limited historic district(s). 	Town Planner MHS	
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Encourage voluntary inclusion of other individual properties. 	MHS	
			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Piggyback local incentives onto the Historic Preservation Residential Tax Credit, Chapter 33.1 of Title 44 of the RI General Laws for giving tax credits to architectural preservation projects. It creates a nonpartisan panel of experts, and with approval at the state level, the local tax credit could be made automatic. 	Town Council	Ongoing

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Cultural and Historical Resources

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
			5. Develop a program for assisting property owners to place easements in perpetuity on their historic structures. These easements are attached to the deed for the property on which the structure stands and generally apply to the exterior of the building only, although several buildings in Newport County have interior easements as well.	MHS	

GOAL III Contemporary Buildings

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
The Town should recognize the value of contemporary architecture and prioritize buildings for protection.	Any inventory of buildings in this category will be open to discussion. However, the types of buildings that may be designated include: Tommy's Diner on East Main Road; the Navy Housing projects on West Main Road, (Anchorage); and the early motels, such as the Floradale Motor Court (now known as the Sandpiper). Other buildings should include some of the modern churches which express the tradition of religious toleration on Aquidneck Island or which function as centers of the many ethnic traditions in Middletown. Appendix I lists these culturally significant buildings.	History does not end with the advent of the 21st century. Many buildings built during the 20th century, which we take for granted, can be saved if steps are taken today. Many of the older historic buildings have been saved simply through neglect or because of a lack of pressure for new and different kinds of buildings on a given piece of property. With the dramatically increased pressure on the land in recent years, the preservation of these new cultural resources has to take a more active approach.	<p>1. Identify those structures built within the last 30 to 50 years which, while seemingly commonplace today because of either their newness or their constant use, are likely to become as valuable to the town as those buildings currently viewed as historically significant.</p> <p>2. Any recognized cultural and/or historical resource in Middletown that is in eminent jeopardy of being altered or demolished shall be photographed and documented by the Middletown Historical Society for the historical record.</p>	MHS	Ongoing

Comment [d7]: Preserve historic record that preserves a sense of place – Nostalgic history

Comment [d8]: Preserve historic documents, photos, and records

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ltural and Historical Resources

7: Farms Traditional Use of Land

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
Keep as much land in Middletown available for productive uses as farmland as possible.	<p>Farms are also eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, and the same regulations that protect historic buildings apply to these traditional uses of the land. The only farm in Middletown currently on the National Register of Historic Places is the Bailey Farm at 373 Wyatt Road. Farms that are eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The David Albro Farm, 1219 East Main Road 2. The Prescott Farm, West Main Road 3. RI Nursery Barn and Stable, East Main Road <p>There are a number of other farms that have a great deal of local significance such as the Simmons - Coggeshall Farm, which also includes an important cemetery.</p>	<p>Agriculture has always been one of Middletown's most important activities and most of the town's land, at one time or another has been under cultivation. In the past 10 years a substantial number of farms have been sold to developers. Any further reduction in the number of farms in Middletown would not only alter the essential character of the town, but would also put the town at risk should the importation of foodstuffs become impossible during some unforeseen future crisis.</p> <p>Since World War II, many acres of farmland that previously produced foodstuffs have been converted to planting nursery stock and turf. While these activities are carried on using industrial techniques, they still conform to the traditional use of the land, and should be protected.</p> <p>Farms themselves are part of the scenic beauty of the area. Although farming is no longer the</p>	1. Promote participation in the State's Farm, Forest, and Open Space program (RIGL 44-3-32.2), with the emphasis on potential tax incentives for property owners who keep their land in agricultural production.	Planning Board/ Town Council	Ongoing
			2. Encourage partnerships between governmental and private funding sources to purchase development rights to farms and other areas of traditional use of the land. This strategy is becoming increasingly popular across the nation as well as in Newport County. By combining forces with government and private sectors, the burden of expenses can be shared.	Planning Board/ Town Council	Ongoing
			3. Encourage alternatives to traditional farming, such as: vineyards, nurseries, potato growing and turf farming as a means to preserve farmland as working farms and open space.	Planning Board/ Town Council	Ongoing
			4. Provide zoning and subdivision incentives for the preservation of open space, greenways and agricultural land as part of the development process.	ZBR/Planning Board	Ongoing

Comment [d9]: Mention State's acquisition program

Comment [d10]: Develop Open Space Tax incentive to encourage the preservation of open space, with possible deed restriction or other recoup measures

Comment [d11]: Reword to incorporate actual policy recommendation

Comment [d12]: Insert mention of Land Trust cooperation

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Cultural and Historical Resources

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
			5. Where preservation of farms and agricultural land is not feasible, provide for development standards that preserve scenic views and greenways.	Planning Board	

Comment [d9]: Mention State's acquisition program
 Comment [d10]: Develop Open Space Tax incentive to encourage the preservation of open space, with possible deed restriction or other recoup measures

GOAL V: Institutions

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
Support and strengthen those institutions which are either cultural resources on their own, or to which they are of other important cultural resources has been entrusted.	Public schools, while often dealt with as public facilities in long-range plans are also important cultural resources. St. George's School, while a private institution, still enriches the cultural life of the community and should be included in this inventory. 1. Churches are another important cultural resource in Middletown and are centers of ethnic and cultural activities and may own historically significant buildings. 2. Finally, there are many non-profit organizations, both private and public, which meet the criteria for being cultural resources. These include The Middletown Public Library, The Norman Bird Sanctuary, The Middletown Historical Society, The Newport County YMCA, the Potter League, and the Sachuest Point Wildlife Refuge.		1. Establish a Middletown Cultural Committee. 2. Identify the cultural resources of Middletown's private and public institutions. 3. Promote preservation of cultural resources.	Town Council MCC MCC	 Ongoing Ongoing

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Cultural and Historical Resources

GOAL IV: Cemeteries

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Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
The Town should take the lead in reserving historic cemeteries and native American burial grounds.	<p>The State of Rhode Island's historic cemetery program, which is administered through the Department of Veterans Affairs, has identified and labeled approximately 60 cemeteries in Middletown. There may be others not included in the State's Historic Cemetery program.</p> <p>The Middletown Historical Society has identified 74 historic cemeteries that are described in Philip Michael O'Shea's book. This publication has been cross-checked against the State's inventory for completeness, and a comprehensive list is attached as Appendix 4.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Locate, identify and inventory the grave markers in all the cemeteries and all burial grounds in Middletown. 2. The major threat to these cemeteries is lack of maintenance. This should be made a responsibility of the Department of Public Works. A well-organized and coordinated volunteer effort employing, for example, Boy Scouts might also be effective. Exemplary programs on a local level exist where a perpetual care program is required to protect all historic cemeteries in the town. 3. Establish an adopt-a-spot program for historic cemeteries and burial grounds. 	<p>MHS</p> <hr/> <p>DPW</p> <hr/> <p>Town Council</p>	Ongoing

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Cultural and Historical Resources

GOAL VII: Rights of Way to Cultural Resources

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
		<p>The preservation of cultural resources is justified only to the degree to which they are available to the public for education and for the pure enjoyment they afford. The issue of rights of way to either cultural or natural resources is often seen as being in conflict with the issue of the rights of private property. While the legal points of this conflict are beyond the scope of this plan, if the resources to which the rights of way give access are viewed as part of our common heritage in Middletown, the two sets of issues should be more easily reconciled. A method to resolve this dichotomy is that tax credit for preserving these cultural resources has an implied requirement to provide for their availability to the public. Rights of way therefore must be established and maintained.</p>	<p>Because so many of the cultural resources in Middletown exist on private property, providing rights of way to them will have to be largely a voluntary effort. Easements in perpetuity, discussed elsewhere, are useful tools. In new developments, owners should be required to provide permanently designated rights-of-way to defined natural and cultural resources. To implement this goal, the Zoning Ordinance should be modified.</p>		
			<p>1. Establish easements where necessary to protect public access.</p> <p>2. Enforce the public rights-of-way and easements when public access is challenged.</p>	<p>Town Council/ Town Solicitor</p> <p>Town Council/ Town Solicitor</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

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Cultural and Historical Resources

GOAL VIII: Archeological Sites

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
Protect known archeological sites from disruption.	The best known archeological site in Middletown is the Gardiner Pond Shell Midden, 583 Third Beach Road. The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, in cooperation with the Newport Historical Society, is publishing a forthcoming statewide survey of archeological sites.		To implement this goal, the town should adopt an ordinance to protect and preserve areas of high archeological potential. The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission has prepared a model ordinance to protect archeological resources.		
			1. Identify sites, and encourage controlled excavation and study of these sites on a prioritized basis.	MHS	Jul-08
			2. Develop an ordinance to provide protection.	MHS	Jul-08

GOAL IX: Unique Features

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
The Town should take a lead role in preserving unique features that give Middletown its unique character.	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 feature offers real alternatives for the problem of congested traffic on the Island during the summer. RIDOT is currently conducting a rail study for this vital transportation corridor. Middletown, in partnership with Newport and Portsmouth, must lobby hard to preserve and upgrade this		These unique resources can best be preserved through a combination of zoning, watershed protection, and tax advantages to ensure their continued operation. 1. Identify resources in need of protection. 2. Provide recommendations for preserving unique features to the Town Council.	MHS/MCC MHS/MCC	

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ltural and Historical Resources

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
			3. Incorporate protections for unique features into the Town's zoning and subdivision regulations.	Planning Board	

GOAL X: Military Fortifications from the Revolutionary War Period

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
The Town should take a lead role in providing protection. 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. These remaining fortifications	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, mislabeled as Green End Fort by a monument at the site, is located at the end of Vernon Avenue. Appendix 5 lists proposed historic sites.		Strict zoning regulations should be enacted to prevent any destruction of these nationally significant places. The potential for education is so high at both sites that the town should consider administering them as parks.	Town Council/ Planning Board	
			1. Enact zoning regulations to protect military fortifications. 2. Consider administering forts as parks.	Town Council/	

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Cultural and Historical Resources

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
				Planning Board	

GOAL XI: Underwater Historic Resources

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
Preserve historic shipwrecks or other underwater historic artifacts that may be found in our coastal waters in cooperation with the City of Newport.	No inventory of underwater resources has been established. Documentary sources suggest that there are artifacts and wrecks dating as far back as the 1770s which should be explored.		Because underwater historic shipwrecks are protected by the Underwater Shipwrecks Act, they are the property of the state and, as such, a permit from the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission is required prior to conducting any archeological study of shipwrecks. Proposals for implementation should be developed in consort with the completion of Newport's plan. 1. Coordinate with the city of Newport to preserve underwater historic sites.	MHS	Ongoing

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GOAL XII: Scenic Roads

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
Identify and protect scenic roads along with bordering trees and stone walls, so as to maintain their rural and aesthetic character within Middletown.			1. Inventory and map scenic roads. 2. Consider establishing an "Adopt-a-road" program to provide beautification projects. 3		
			4. Enforce the ordinance that provides for the protection of stone walls. 5. Trees should remain and planted as necessary to provide a canopy of shade and fall color on scenic roads.		
			6. Implement the Paradise Avenue Loop Scenic Highway Stewardship Plan.		
			7. Protect and enhance scenic roads and vistas along the northern portion of West Main Road and Burma Road/Defense Highway in accordance with the West Side Master Plan.		

GOAL XIII: Stone Walls

Policy	Inventory	Discussion	Implementation	Lead Dept	Target Date
Prevent the destruction of the remaining hand-built stone walls which delineate fields throughout Middletown.			1. Enforce Ordinance 2. Protect stone walls through Conservation Development design process.		

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Prepare a comprehensive prioritized inventory of cultural resources in Middletown. This should be accomplished in partnership with the Middletown Historical Society and the Aquidneck Island Land Trust.

The^[d1] town must strongly support those town agencies and boards that prioritize the cultural and historical integrity of the town.

Preserve the cultural resources of Middletown in a manner consistent with its evolution and growth and place those preservation efforts high on the town's list of priorities.

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Strengthen the administrative and educational infrastructure that is necessary for the continuing preservation of these resources.

The Middletown Historical Society shall maintain a comprehensive listing of all historic and architecturally important buildings.

Encourage the School Committee and the Administration, to develop curricula and programs in the schools from the first grade through high school which would educate the children of Middletown on the importance of the cultural resources inventoried herein. Programs could include class projects which would carry out some of the work necessary for the implementation of specific objectives, such as updating surveys, cleaning up historic cemeteries, helping on archeological excavations, and even repairing stone walls.

Support the development of tours and the printing of brochures of the cultural resources for both local residents and visitors to the area. Publications describing routes of such tours could be made available at the Newport County Visitors and Convention Bureau, as well as at the Norman Bird Sanctuary, the Middletown Historical Society and the Middletown Public Library.

Raise funds in both the public and private sectors to create a grant program to help pay for the maintenance of cultural resources, the collection and conservation of primary and secondary research materials, and educational programs to increase public awareness

Maintain a local register of historic buildings as a supplement to the Middletown Historical Society book on historic homes. While this plan calls for working with the National Register of Historic Places, many cultural resources which are important for area residents are not of national significance and, therefore, will not meet the requirements of the Register.

Develop programs to assist property owners, architects and contractors with the development of plans for the renovation of old buildings as well as new construction that is sympathetic with the objectives of this plan. These programs

should encourage a sensitive adaptive, commercial or private reuse of historic structures.

Develop cooperative agreements with public and private organizations for the preparation, updating and maintenance of comprehensive surveys of all the cultural resources mentioned in this plan. These surveys should compile a compendium of existing laws and regulations on the national, state and local level concerning each type of cultural resource.

Develop an historic district program that will identify historic buildings and encourage the owners to include their properties in a designated historic district.