

GROTON PLAN OF CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT/ MUNICIPAL COASTAL PROGRAM UPDATE

HISTORIC RESOURCES

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Prepared for:
Town of Groton
Planning Commission

Prepared by:



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HISTORIC RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

The character of a community is strongly shaped by its history and connection to those historic resources. These resources also shape our values and experiential relationship with a place. A sense of place is defined by the community's interaction with the physical and built landscape of a place, over time, and along with the current sense of historic and cultural significance of places, people, and events. Culture is a process of incremental change and requires a strong understanding of the historic changes that have preceded us.

The utilization of the Plan of Conservation and Development to preserve and enhance desired aspects of Groton's history and culture should begin with a collective perception of the elements that contribute to the formation of the town's history. .

PERIODS OF SIGNIFICANCE

In order to set a framework for protection of historic and cultural resources, a net of nominal values is created to define what the community finds most symbolic of character, and most crucial for protection. The 1996 Historic Preservation Plan and the 2002 Plan of Conservation and Development both define by using four periods of significance. The list has been appended to include the Period of pre-Colonial Native American Settlement, due to new archeological discoveries in the past 15 years. These periods are not discrete, but instead represent five major periods of development in the history of Groton that create much of the sense of community and culture today, and therefore represent the areas most crucial to maintain. They are:

1. Native American Settlement (PreHistory-1666), until the establishment of the Mashantucket reservation
2. Early European Settlement (1637-1781), including the Pequot War and Battle of Groton Heights
3. Maritime Orientation (Late 17th c. through 20th c.), including shipbuilding, privateering, whaling and fishing, and Naval/ Submarine histories
4. Waterfront and Seasonal Growth (Late 19th c. Mid 20th c.), including Grand Hotels/ Shennecossett Golf Course, and Groton Long Point.
5. Transportation-motivated growth (Mid-20th c.-today), including the construction of I-95, reorientation along Route 1, and construction of mid-century residential developments.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Groton has a long a diverse history and prides itself in its continued preservation of that history. Within the Town of Groton there are five Historic Districts listed nationally and on the State Register. Two districts, Burnett's Corner and Mystic River are in the Town. Three others, Groton Bank, Eastern Point and Noank, are in the City of Groton and the Village of Noank, respectively. Additionally, there are eight National Register of Historic Places, (NRHP) Sites within the town.

The Historic Preservation Plan from 1996 can continue to serve as a comprehensive review and analysis of Groton's cultural and historic resources. It provides a clear framework for the future of preservation in the town, however, due to continued Preservation efforts, is in need of some minor updates.

The Town (and City) have five designated historic districts which substantially protect the structures and infrastructure of these important cultural and historic areas. The local Historic District Commissions regulate activity including construction and demolition of buildings, and alteration of external architectural features. The State of Connecticut also allows for the establishment, by the Zoning Commission, of protected Village areas through Historic Resources Overlay Zoning, which do not require the endorsement of property owners. These districts are often best used in places where the overall character is more important than any set of specific properties. For example, commercial districts, whose mixed-use, small scale commercial and residential character is more important than specific architectural details, may be 'over-protected' by a Historic District designation, but a Village District may prevent out of character buildings and unsympathetic development.

Groton has been recognized as a Certified Local Government through the Connecticut Historical Commission. This program provides financial assistance to participating communities to study and preserve local resources.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

"The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources."¹ There are currently 80,000 properties on the National Register. Under the Federal NRHP program, properties can be designated buildings, sites, districts, structures, and objects. These properties are not necessarily owned by the federal government.

NRHP Buildings, structures, and objects are singular properties that are considered worthy of preservation generally regardless of their context or siting, such as a historic house.

NRHP Sites are singular properties, whose siting and area provide significance, such as in the case of a battlefield.

NRHP Districts can include many objects, sites, structures, and buildings, that are worthy of preservation because of their grouping, concentration, and location. Districts include **contributing** and **non-contributing** structures.

¹ <http://www.nps.gov/nr/about.htm>

Contributing structures add to the value of the district as determined by its Period of Significance. For example a modern gas station may exist in a colonial Historic District as a non-contributing structure, as it fulfills a contemporary need, but offers no connection to the colonial Period of Significance.

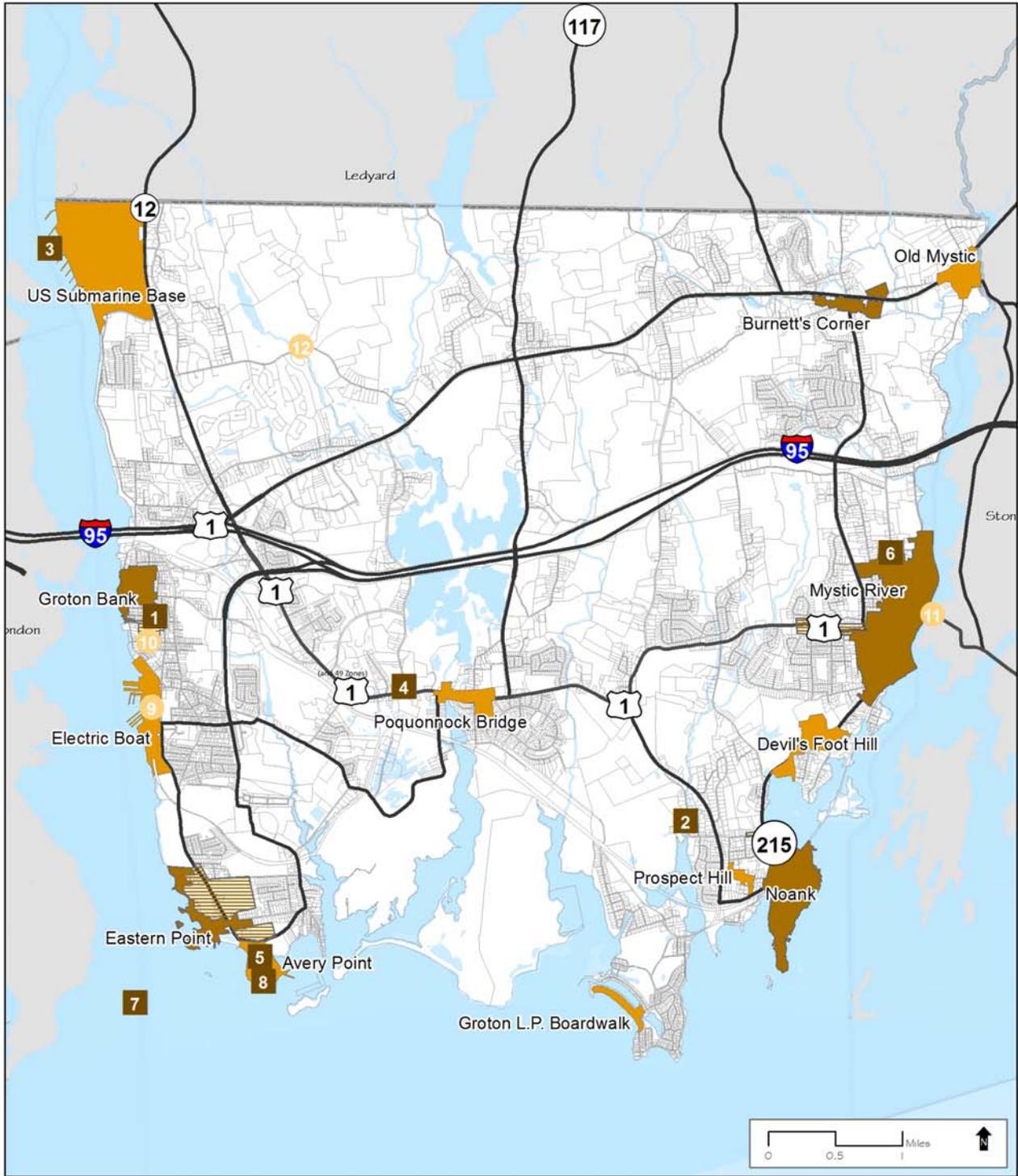
Sites, objects, structures, or building may also be listed separately, even if they are contributing structures in a historic district. For example, the 1996 Preservation Plan suggested listing the Mystic Bascule Bridge as a NRHP site, even though it is a contributing structure in the Mystic River Historic District. The bridge, as a premier example of a Bascule type bridge, would be important even if it did not connect the two sides of the Mystic River.

NRHP listing provides a guarantee of consideration in planning for Federal, Federally licensed, and Federally assisted projects, under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 ; eligibility for certain tax provisions; and qualification for Federal grants for historic preservation. However, their national or state designation does not offer significant protection from destruction or substantial alteration by private owners when no Federal monies are involved. Protection is best served by ownership through a preservation organization or society, or designation in a local Historic District.

Groton has 13 listings on the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Historic Places. The 1996 Preservation Plan also suggested eleven potential new NRHP districts or expansions, and four potential new sites. These sites and districts are all deemed significant to American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture.

The 1996 Preservation Plan also suggested that Fort Griswold be nominated as a **National Historic Landmark**. Landmark properties are nationally recognized as having “exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States.”² There are less than 2,500 National Historic Landmarks.

² <http://www.nps.gov/nhl/whatis.htm>



Town of Groton

Plan of Conservation & Development Update

National Register of Historic Places

- NRHP Sites
- Potential NRHP Sites
- NRHP District
- Potential NRHP District Expansion
- Potential NRHP District

Source:
 * Parcels, Street Centerlines:
 Town of Groton GIS Dept.
 * Basemap Data: CT DEP Map &
 Geographic Information Center (2012)

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 Deliberations may not be exact.

Date: March 2013



EXISTING NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC PROPERTIES

1. Fort Griswold
2. Yeoman House (Cove Neck Farm)
3. USS Nautilus
4. Jabez Smith House
5. Branford House
6. Pequot Fort
7. New London Ledge Lighthouse
8. Avery Point Lighthouse



IMAGE 1: JABEZ SMITH HOUSE

EXISTING NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS

- A. Mystic River Historic District
- B. Noank Historic District
- C. Eastern Point Historic District
- D. Groton Bank Historic District
- E. Burnett's Corner Historic District

POTENTIAL N NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS

- F. Eastern Point expansion (Avery Point)
- G. Groton Bank expansion
- H. Mystic expansion
- I. Noank expansion
- J. US Submarine Base
- K. Electric Boat Shipyard
- L. Devil's Foot Hill
- M. Groton Long Point Boardwalk
- N. Prospect Hill
- O. Poquonnock Bridge
- P. Old Mystic



IMAGE 2: GROTON LONG POINT BOARDWALK

POTENTIAL NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC PROPERTIES/ NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

9. Electric Boat Shipyard – site status
10. Fort Griswold – landmark status
11. Mystic Bascule Bridge – site status
12. Gungywamp area – site status

Other areas that may have significance for state or national recognition include the former railroad house in the Bluff Point areas, and the World War II worker housing in the Midway Oval area.

SITES

Several aspects of the historic built environment have become critical to Groton's identity. Some of these structures and sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Sites or are part of a National Historic District, and most have strong local protection as well. These sites are critical in preserving and identifying Groton's maritime and industrial legacy, and in maintaining a visual identity for the town.



**IMAGE 3: THE GROTON MEMORIAL, BILL
MEMORIAL LIBRARY**

The Groton Monument was built between 1826 and 1830 to commemorate the Battle of Groton Heights, and it stands at the top of the hill overlooking the City of Groton. It was designed by the prominent American architects Andrew Jackson Davis and Ithiel Town, and stands 135 feet tall. A plaque on the monument reads, "This monument was erected under the patronage of the State of Connecticut, a.d. 1830, and in the 55th year of the independence of the U.S.A. in memory of the brave patriots, who fell in the massacre at Fort Griswold, near this spot, on the 6th of Sept. a.d. 1781, when the British, under the command of the traitor, Benedict Arnold, burnt the towns of New London and Groton, and spread desolation and woe throughout this region." The monument and the adjoining Fort Griswold are owned and managed by the State of Connecticut as part of the Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park, and the monument and Battlefield are both part of the proposed expansion of the Groton Bank Historic District.

Two lighthouses mark the mouth of the Thames River, the **Avery Point Light** and the **New London Ledge Light**. Both are on the National Register of Historic Places, and both are active lights and official aids to navigation. New London Ledge was built in 1909 and has operated continuously since. It was automated in 1987. The Avery Point light was built in 1943 as a memorial to lighthouses and light keepers. It was deactivated in 1967 and eventually abandoned. Restoration was completed in 2006, when it was relit and re-added to navigational charts. Its site is currently part of the University of Connecticut Avery Point Campus.



LEFT, IMAGE 4: AVERY POINT LIGHTHOUSE, UNITED STATES COAST GUARD, PHOTOGRAPHER NOT SPECIFIED

RIGHT, IMAGE 5: VIEW LOOKING EAST - NEW LONDON LEDGE LIGHTHOUSE, LONG ISLAND SOUND, EAST OF MAIN HARBOR CHANNEL, NEW LONDON, NEW LONDON COUNTY, CT, LOC, HAER CONN,6-NEWLO,16--2

The Mystic River Bascule Bridge spans the Mystic River connecting the village of Mystic in the towns of Groton and Stonington. It carries Main Street, US Route 1 over the Mystic River, and is a movable span bridge. It was built in 1920, designed by Thomas Ellis Brown. It has become the iconic heart of the village of Mystic, and is considered significant as an example of the Brown Balance Beam Bascule. It is listed as a contributing structure in the Mystic River Bridge National Historic District (Stonington), as the “1924 lift bridge over the Mystic River.” It is not listed as a contributing structure in the Mystic River Historic District (Groton), and therefore should be considered for addition if the district is amended as proposed in the 1996 Historic Preservation Plan.



IMAGE 6: VIEW SOUTHWEST, NORTH ELEVATION - Mystic River Bridge, Spanning Mystic River at U.S. Route 1, LOC, HAER CONN,6-GROT,2--2

Groton is perhaps best known for its shipbuilding, and as the home of the first nuclear-powered submarine. The **USS Nautilus (SSN-571)** was launched in 1954 in the Thames River, after being designed and built at Electric Boat in Groton. It has been decommissioned and designated a National Historic Landmark. It is preserved at the Submarine Force Library and Museum, which is run by the Navy, and sees an estimated 250,000 visitors per year.



IMAGE 7: USS NAUTILUS (SSN 571), THE WORLD'S FIRST NUCLEAR POWERED SUBMARINE, LEAVES THE ELECTRIC BOAT SHIPYARD IN GROTON EN ROUTE NAVAL SUBMARINE BASE, U.S. NAVY PHOTO BY NICOLE HAWLEY.

MUNICIPAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

There are four municipal historic districts in the Town of Groton. They are:

- A. Center Groton Historic District
- B. Mystic River Historic District
- C. Eastern Point Historic District (City of Groton)
- D. Burnett's Corner Historic District

Municipal historic districts offer some of the best protection for areas with a high concentration of historic fabric by creating an additional level of municipal oversight of changes that will effect buildings' influence on the integrity of the district. Private land owners must apply for approval over changes to their property that will potentially affect the building's significance in the district. This approval is in addition to any zoning, building, or other municipal permissions.

The Historic District Commission (HDC) is the review body that oversees applications for the three Town managed districts (excluding the Eastern Point Historic District). Their duties are "to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the town through the preservation and protection of buildings, places and districts of historic interest within the town by maintenance of such landmarks in the history of architecture of the town, of the state or of the nation and through the development of appropriate settings for such buildings, places and districts." (Code 2-191). The HDC issues Certificates of Appropriateness.

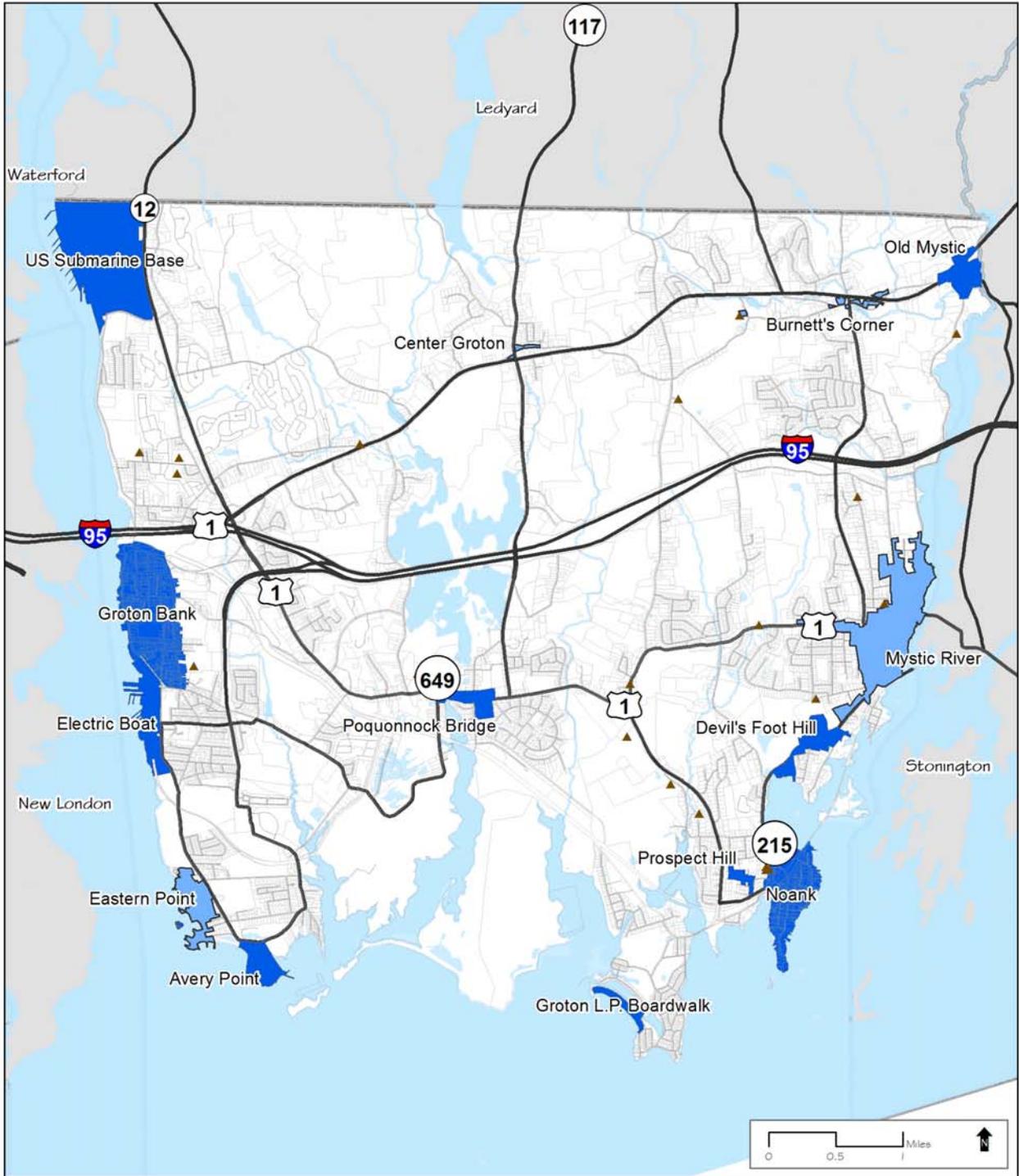
The Committee is made up of five member (with 3 alternates), two of whom must be property owners within one of the districts. The State Historic Commission mandates that the Committee shall also include at least professionals in architecture, history, planning, archeology, or historic preservation, in order to continue to be a Certified Local Government.

The Eastern Point Historic District, in the City of Groton, is overseen by the Eastern Point Historic District Commission (EPHDC). The EPHDC has five permanent members and one alternate. The EPHDC meets as needed, usually five times per year.

HISTORIC COMMISSION ACTIVITY, 1998-PRESENT

The Groton Historic District Commission has reviewed 895 applications on 359 properties since 1998. These applications range from demolition of entire building or outbuildings, new construction of entire buildings or outbuildings, to minor door and window replacements. The most common applications are for new roofing; new windows; landscaping plans including driveways, fences, and stone walls; and construction of outbuildings, such as sheds or garages. Of the 895 applications, only 29 were denied, and of those denials, 13 were eventually approved, presumably with changes made to the initial design. The majority of the denials involved proposed materials that were not in keeping with the historic character of the property.

The Eastern Point Historic District Commission reviews five to ten applications per year. Nearly all are approved outright, or are denied without prejudice, requesting more complete applications.



Town of Groton

Plan of Conservation & Development Update

Local Historic Districts

- Historic District
- Potential Local District
- Cemetery

Source:
 • Parcels, Street Centerlines:
 Town of Groton GIS Dept.
 • Basemap Data: CT DEP Map 4
 Geographic Information Center (2012)

This map was developed for use
 as a planning document.
 Delineations may not be exact.

Date: March 2013

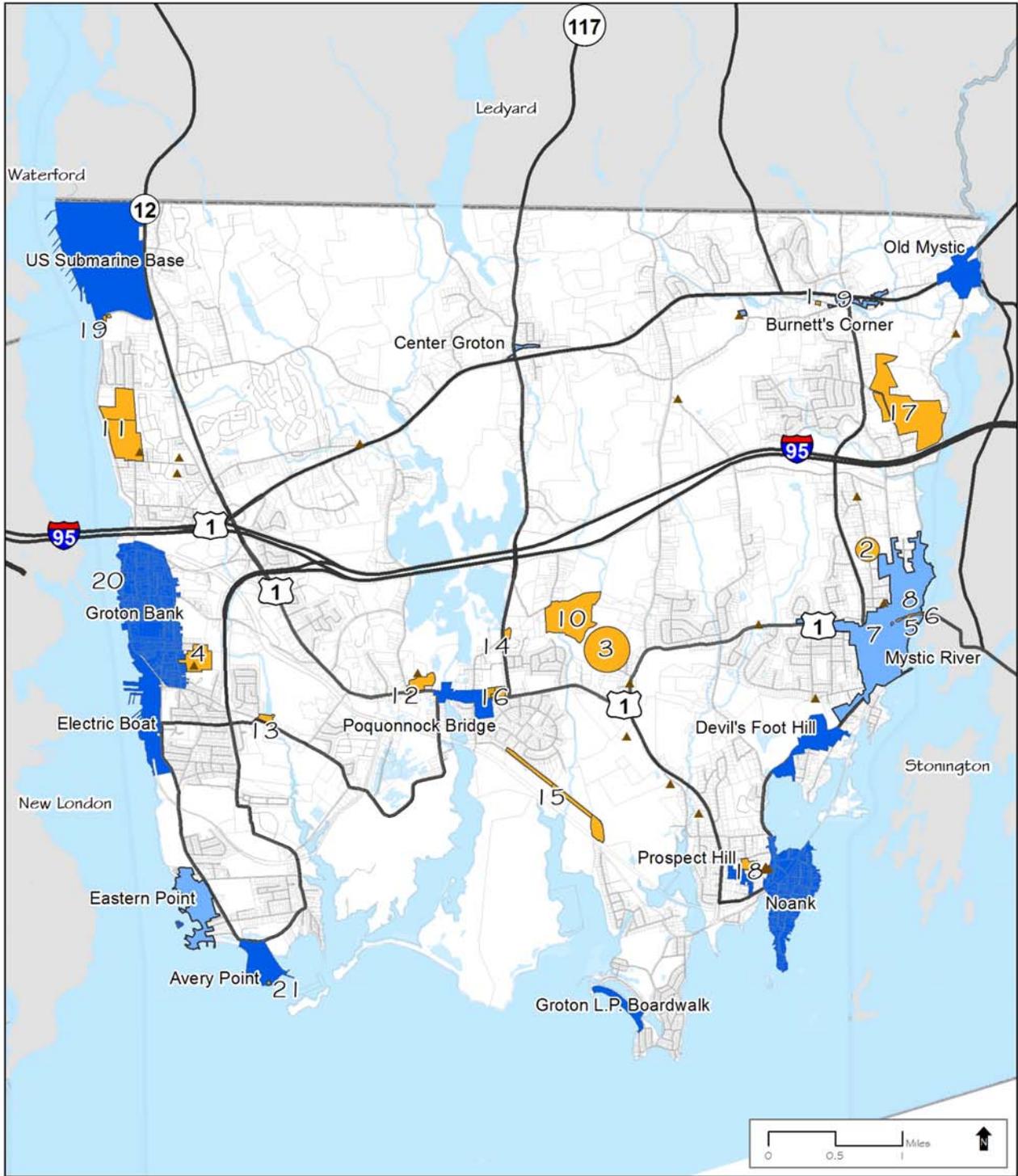


OTHER NOTABLE CHANGES 1998-PRESENT

It is important to note that success in accomplishing POCD objectives relating to historical and cultural assets does not solely rely on regulation through local historic districts. In fact, actions taken (or not taken) by other government authorities, non-profits, individual property owners and others can and often do have as much or even more impact. Over the period since the last POCD update, actions affecting land, structures and other historical assets located both within and outside of the Town's historic districts illustrate the complexity of trying to manage these circumstances in a cohesive and consistent manner. The following examples are not intended to be all inclusive, but will adequately show that success is often not a matter of regulation, but a result of creative collaboration between stakeholders.

The following projects are indexed by number to the following map, and are described in the following pages.

1. Birkhamshaw (Upton Bass)
2. Pequot Battlefield Archeological Survey
3. Mystic Woods Archaeological Survey
4. Groton Monument/Groton Heights Battlefield
5. Mystic Streetscape and Associated Archaeological Investigations
6. Mystic River Bascule Bridge
7. Chipperini Fire/Demolition
8. Central Hall Project
9. Mason's Hall
10. Sheep Farm
11. Oddfellows/Fairview
12. Connecticut Center for Massage Therapy
13. Electric Boat Factory Demolition and Site Remediation
14. Jabez Smith House Renovations
15. Trolley Line Pedestrian Trail
16. Doctor Burrows Farm
17. Former Mystic Oral School Reuse
18. Noank School Reuse
19. Navy Base Gateway
20. Mother Bailey House
21. Avery Point Lighthouse



Town of Groton

Plan of Conservation & Development Update

Notable Changes Since 2002

- 4 Historic Site
- Historic District
- Potential Local District
- ▲ Cemetery

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Birkhamshaw (Upton Bass) in the Burnett's Corner Historic District, was a collaborative effort involving the HDC, the economic development commission, zoning board of appeals and OPDS staff. It resulted in the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of an old witch hazel mill foundation for small scale craft manufacturing (stand up string bass's).

The **Pequot Battlefield Archeological Survey** has been undertaken by the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center with funding from the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program. It is identifying and cataloguing sites and artifacts relating to the 1637 Battle at Mystic Fort, under project direction of Dr. Kevin McBride of the University of Connecticut.

The **Mystic Woods Archaeological Survey** was a site investigation associated with a proposed active senior housing development near the intersection of Flanders Road and Route 1.

Renovation of the **Groton Monument/Groton Heights Battlefield**, have been undertaken to restore the sites and structures relating to the 1781 battle, the only Revolutionary Battle to take place in Connecticut.

The recently completed **Mystic Streetscape Project Associated Archaeological Investigations** were associated with a larger grant funded project which included extensive improvements to historic downtown commercial area to upgrade the sidewalks, parking, and other elements along West Main Street and Water Street. The project included identification and documentation of subsurface artifacts affected by the project scope

Rehabilitation of the **Mystic Bascule Bridge** is underway to maintain the historic bridge and will guarantee that it continues to operate as both a physical and symbolic connection between the historic villages in Stonington and Groton. The project aims to enhance operations and public safety, while trying to retain historic scale/attributes given the unique context.

Arson and subsequent demolition of the **Chipperini** building, destroyed an exemplary structure located within the Mystic historic district.

Multiple development approvals for the **Central Hall Project** have been issued to permit the mixed use redevelopment of this landmark site, while respecting the historical scale and façade of the existing building.

There have been several unsuccessful attempts to stabilize and renovate **Mason's Hall**, a historic structure located within the Burnett's Corner Historic District.

The "**Sheepfarm**" was preserved as open space with assistance from DEEP grant, which resulted in preservation and public access to historic and cultural assets located within the site.

Approval of a master plan for the **Oddfellows/Fairview** facility to be implemented in phases over 8-10 years, creates the ability to generate additional income from the development, which will help in securing the preservation of historic structures.

The **Connecticut Center for Massage Therapy** is an adaptive re-use of historic period structure for a moderate scale educational and personal service use within the historic Poquonnock area.

The **Electric Boat Factory Demolition and Site Remediation** demolished the three story, brick, former manufacturing facility.

Jsbez Smith House Renovations is the continued preservation, occupancy and renovations of and to a home associated with one of the Town's colonial period families.

The **G & S Trolley Line Pedestrian Trail** is the adaptive reuse of former trolley line right of way for multi-use recreational path connecting existing neighborhoods to extensive public open space areas.

Approvals have been issued at the **Doctor Borrow's Farm** to allow adaptive re-use and preservation of a large period home and associated accessory structures located along Route 1 within the Poquonock village area.

The State is attempting to develop interest in the sale and/or reuse of the **Former Mystic Oral School**, which may or may not include preservation and/or reuse of potentially historic structures and/or facilities.

A committee to study options and develop plans for the **Noank School Reuse** will address reuse of a substantial structure in the Village of Noank.

Land acquisition, remediation, planning and other related initiatives undertaken to enhance the physical form and function of the **Navy Base Gateway** area at and around the Nautilus Submarine Museum.

The City of Groton acquired the **Mother Bailey House** on Thames Street in 2010, and began the work of stabilizing and restoring the home of Anna Warner Baily, a Revolutionary War era hero and patriot. The home is believed to have hosted President James Monroe in 1817, General Marquis de Lafayette in 1824, Andrew Jackson and then Vice President Martin Van Buren in 1833.

Restoration of **Avery Point Lighthouse** began in 2004 and was completed in 2006. It was relit and listed as an official aid to navigation and an active light on navigation charts in October of 2006. The lighthouse was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.

Additionally, updates to the **City and Town Zoning Regulations** since 1998 include new language that is sympathetic to historic preservation.

CULTURAL ASSETS

Groton also has many organizations and public bodies committed to preserving Groton's cultural and historic identity.

Public

The **Town of Groton Historian** maintains and documents the local history of the Town and provides education support for the community and schools.

The **Town of Groton Historic District Commission** (HDC) manages Historic Districts in the Town (not the City). These include Burnett's Corners; Center Groton; and Mystic (The City manages Eastern Point through Eastern Point HDC). The HDC's role is to promote the educational, cultural, economic, and general welfare of the Town through the preservation and protection of buildings, places, and districts of historic interest within the Town by maintenance of such landmarks in the history of architecture of the Town, of the State, or of the nation and through the development of appropriate settings for such buildings, places, and districts. The HDC issues Certificates of Appropriateness.

The **Eastern Point Historic District Commission** manages the Eastern Point Historic District in the City of Groton. It performs similar duties as the Town HDC, including providing information and education relating to the Eastern Point Historic District, and issuing Certificates of Appropriateness for any building that takes place within the Historic District.

The **Groton Public Library** together with the **Bill Memorial Library** and the **Mystic & Noank Library**, maintains a local history archive along with an online collection of maps and photographs of historic Groton.

The **Groton Town Clerk** maintains all vital and land records for the town. The Town of Groton has vital records and land records dating back to the 1600's, including cemetery records.

The **Parks and Forestry Division** maintains Town owned historic cemeteries, the Indian Memorial and Nautilus Overlook Historic Markers, and the Jabez Smith Homestead.

The **Shennecossett Golf Course** was founded in 1898, and since 1969 has been owned and operated by the Town of Groton. It maintains limited archival documents relating to the history of the golf course and the Griswold Hotel.

Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park is operated and maintained by the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection. This includes the battlefield with restored earthwork battery, cannons, and a later period shot furnace and powder magazine and the 1826 Groton Monument. Also on the site are the **Fort Griswold Monument House Museum**, which is operated by the Anna Warner Bailey Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and the **Ebenezer Avery House**, which is managed by the Avery Memorial Association.

The **Jabez Smith House Committee** is responsible for the 1783 farmhouse, which is in Town ownership, and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The Committee is responsible for the management, control, restoration, and repair of the house, along with the furniture and furnishings therein. The Committee is concerned with the

existing structures not the undeveloped land. It provides public access and educational programs, and supports the live-in curator of the house.

The **Thames Maritime Heritage Park Advisory Board** is a public board of four members and two alternates, whose role is to advise the Commissioner of Environmental Protection on the promotion and development of Thames Maritime Heritage Park.

Private

Groton Bank Historical Association, GBHA's objective is to research and promote the history of Groton Bank and to maintain the historical architecture and village character of this area listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The **Noank Historical Society** was founded in 1966 and is dedicated to preserving Noank's Maritime Heritage. They own and maintain the **Sylvan Street Museum** which houses archives on New England Shore History and the Society's general collections, and the **Latham Chester Store Museum** which acts as a venue for the Society's various social programs, meetings, lectures, and member art exhibitions.

Mystic River Historical Society (MRHS) is centered around the famous Mystic Bridge which has connected Groton and Stonington for nearly 200 years. It is dedicated to preserving and promoting the historical traditions of the greater Mystic area since 1973. They actively collect documents, photographs and artifacts with historic links to the Mystic area, which are housed in the William A. Downes Archives Building, and the 1839 **Portersville Academy** building which serves as the Society's education and outreach space. A schoolroom of the 1840's has been recreated upstairs, and historical displays form a backdrop for educational activities downstairs.

The **Groton Open Space Association** was founded in 1967 with a mission to establish an association of persons interested in conservation, environmental preservation, open space and recreational areas in Southeastern Connecticut. Their work has included the preservation of the Haley Farm, which was originally part of John Winthrop's plantation, Winthrop's Neck, and the Sheepfarm parcel.

The **Submarine Force Library and Museum** is operated by the United States Navy and is the home of the USS Nautilus. The library is the primary repository for artifacts, documents and photographs relating to U.S. Submarine Force history from the Revolutionary War, to the Ohio and Virginia class submarines. The museum's collections include more than 33,000 artifacts, 20,000 significant documents and 30,000 photographs. The 6,000 volume reference and research library is a world-renowned collection relative to the history of U.S. submarines.

The **Avery Memorial Association** is a family organization of the descendants of Christopher Avery, and was organized in 1894 as a non-profit, charitable and educational institution. It is fully responsible for the care of the Memorial at the site of the Avery Family House, "The Hive," the first Avery burying ground in Groton, and the restoration and upkeep of the Ebenezer Avery house.

World War II National Submarine Memorial - East

With the Conning Tower of the USS Flasher (SS-249) as one of its centerpieces, the National Submarine Memorial East in Groton stands in honor to those submariners who are on the "Eternal Patrol."

The Gungywamp Society, founded in 1979, is a nonprofit educational research organization which conducts excavations and tours in the Gungywamp complex, including information about other archaeological and historical sites in Connecticut and elsewhere. The Gungywamp Society is dedicated to the preservation of archaeologically and historically significant sites. As of June, 2009, the Gungywamp Society's artifacts and document materials were removed from a former researcher's home and are now located at the Connecticut State Archaeologist's Office at the University of Connecticut in Storrs.

The **Avery-Copp House Museum** is the 1800 home Rufus Avery and his decedents, overlooking the Thames River. It was lived in continuously by the family until 1991 Avery-Copp family. The carriage house is maintained as an archive storage facility and research center.

Regional

The **New London County Historical Society** was founded in 1870 works to preserve and educate the community on the history of southeastern Connecticut. They maintain one of the largest historic newspaper collections in the state dating to 1753, along with many other documents of regional significance including genealogy material, New London history, whaling history, manuscripts, and artifacts.

The **Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center** maintains the Tribal Archives & Special Collections relating to Native and Tribal history. The Tribal Archives is the repository for historical materials and non-current Tribal records that document the activities, history, and culture of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe and its members. The Special Collections include materials that document the cultures and histories of other Native North Americans. The Research Department, which includes Archaeology, Collections Management, Curation, Conservation and Historical Research, researches and preserves the history and cultural heritage of the Mashantucket Pequot Tribe through a multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural perspective that incorporates oral history, archaeology, material culture and written records.

The **Five Rivers Consortium** was created in November of 1988 as an alliance of non-profit museums, as well as art, historical and educational associations. Its mission is "To cultivate broad public awareness of the variety of cultural, historical and educational opportunities in Southeastern Connecticut."

Mystic Seaport: Museum of America and the Sea was founded in 1929, and is an archival collection and museum village celebrating America's maritime history. It consists of a re-created 19th-century coastal village with historic ships, a working preservation shipyard, and formal exhibit galleries. Mystic Seaport is also home to four vessels that are designated National Historic Landmarks - the Charles W. Morgan, Emma C. Berry, Sabino and L.A. Dunton. Its archives includes art related to America's relationship with the sea and inland waterways; 70,000 book volumes, (more than 3,000 rare books), and 1,000 ships' registers; manuscripts including ships' logs, journals, ledgers, diaries, and documents from the whaling, fishing, recreational boating and shipping industries; 9000 nautical charts and maps; one of the largest maritime photographic archives in North America, containing more than 1,300,000 images from the 1840s to the present; 100,000 naval architectural drawings; oral history interviews, recorded lectures and events, documenting maritime activity, and the people and objects associated with that activity; and over 500 vessels of all sizes from rowboats to kayaks, from schooners to ships.

FINDINGS

- Groton has a remarkable amount of cultural and historic resources, spread throughout the town, and managed by various groups.
- At least ten public departments, commissions, or Committees directly manage historic and cultural resources, even if those resources are not central to their mission.
- At least nine local private groups manage cultural and historic resources, and represent much of the town, however their scope and funding ranges hugely.

EXISTING MUNICIPAL DISTRICTS AND PERIPHERY

- Groton has four local historic districts, Center Groton Historic District, Mystic River Historic District, and Burnett's Corner Historic District, managed by the Groton Historic District Commission; and Eastern Point Historic District, managed by the Eastern Point Historic District Commission.
- The Groton Historic District Commission reviewed 895 applications since 1998.
- 29 applications were denied, and 13 were eventually approved
- The majority of the denials involved proposed materials that were not in keeping with the historic character of the property.
- The Eastern Point Historic District Commission reviews 5-10 applications per year, and nearly all are approved.

NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICTS/SITES

- Groton has thirteen listings on the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Historic Places, eight sites and five districts.
- The Avery Point lighthouse was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.

POTENTIAL FUTURE DISTRICTS/AREAS

- Local historic districts do not include all of the properties contained within the NRHP districts, and therefore do not provide adequate oversight or protection.
- In addition, there are small clusters of buildings throughout the Town that are not individually historic but together represent architecture of various periods of development that may merit recognition.