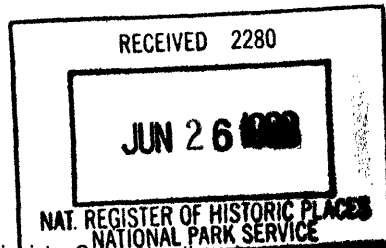


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



284

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name _____

other names/site number Kings Highway North Historic District

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet. not for publication

city or town Westport vicinity

state Connecticut code CT county Fairfield code 001 zip code 06880

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

John W. Shannahan 6/15/98
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

John W. Shannahan, Director, Connecticut Historical Commission
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:)

for [Signature]
Signature of the Keeper

8/14/98
Date of Action

Kings Highway North Historic District
Name of Property

Fairfield, CT
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
107	11	buildings
4	0	sites
		structures
		objects
111	11	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling/secondary structure

COMMERCE/TRADE/speciality store

AGRICULTURE /SUBSISTENCE/ animal facility

FUNERARY/cemetery

EDUCATION/school

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling/secondary structure

FUNERARY/cemetery

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL/Postmedieval English

EARLY REPUBLIC/Federal

MID-19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival/Italian Villa

LATE VICTORIAN/Second Empire

20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival

EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS/
Bungalow/Craftsman

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone/brick

walls weatherboard/ wood shingle

roof asphalt/slate

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Kings Highway North Historic District, Westport, Fairfield County, Connecticut

Section number 2 Page 1

Location

Edge Hill Lane: 6, 12.

Kings Highway North: 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 44, 45, 46, 49, 49A, 49B, 52, 53, 57, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69, 75, 76, 78, 79, 83, Christ Church Society Cemetery, Church of the Assumption Cemetery, green (former drill ground), 93, 96, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107, 108, 109, 111, 113, 115, 116, 117, 119, 120, and King Street Cemetery.

Ludlow Road: 51, 57, 71, 72, 76.

Nutmeg Lane: 1.

Old Hill Road: 1, 4.

Post Road West: 172, 174.

Wilton Road: 107, 109.

Woodside Avenue: 5.

Wright Street: 15, 21, 25, 27, 35, 41, 46, 49, 54, 56, 57, 63, 64, 67, 71, 73, 74, 80.

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National Park Service**

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Continuation Sheet**

Kings Highway North Historic District, Westport, Fairfield County, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 1

The Kings Highway North Historic District is a residential area on the west side of the Saugatuck River in Westport. Situated directly across the river from Westport's downtown business and commercial center, it encompasses about two-thirds of a mile of Kings Highway North, the spine of the district. The secondary streets run generally east and west. Edge Hill Lane, Wright Street, and Ludlow Road (Route 33) on the east side of the district extend downhill to Wilton Road (Route 33), which runs along the river. Short sections of Old Hill Road, Nutmeg Lane, and Woodside Avenue are included on the west.

The nominated district encompasses most of the local historic district of the same name that was established in 1972 and amended in 1989. As shown on the attached map, the boundaries of the nominated district differ in the southern part. Several more historic properties have been added, especially on Ludlow Road, and modern houses within the existing district perimeter were excluded (see Item #10, Boundary Justification).

The district contains 122 resources of which 111 (91 percent) are contributing. The majority of the contributing resources are houses built between 1736 to 1948 and their associated outbuildings. Also included is a former mill, a blacksmith shop, and a schoolhouse, all converted to residential use. Of the 12 non-contributing resources, seven are houses and five are garages. All of the houses are wood-frame construction and generally similar in scale. With few exceptions, they are sited close to the road and a uniform setback is maintained. In a few cases, backlots have been developed, a process that began in the late nineteenth century.

Four historic sites are part of the district. A small triangular green at the intersection with Old Hill Road and Kings Highway North was used a military drill ground (c. 1760-1850; Inventory #45). Two adjoining cemeteries across the road to the east, which together encompass about three acres, date from the mid-nineteenth to c. 1900 (Inventory #s 46, 47). An earlier graveyard, the King Street Cemetery, laid out in 1740, occupies the northwest corner of Kings Highway North and Wilton Road at the northern entrance to the district (Inventory #73).

Among the several buildings that have been moved in the district are the mill and the school noted above. The mill, which now is the rear ell of a c. 1812 house, was moved here in the early 1800s (Inventory #26). The former Shercrow School was moved and set on a high stone foundation at its present location in the the 1930s (Inventory #6). It once was located on Old Hill Road just west of the district. The local historic district was amended in 1989 to include a mid-nineteenth-century farmhouse, which was moved back on its original lot on Post Road West and reconstructed with an attached barn in 1988 and 1989 (Inventory #85). An associated vernacular building reconstructed on the adjoining lot is not part of the local historic district, but is included in the nominated district (Inventory #86).

The two earliest houses in the district are the c. 1730 Lt. John Taylor House and the 1736 Daniel Freelove Nash House (Inventory #s 82, 10; Photograph #s 1, 2). Two-story Colonial saltboxes with integral rear ells, they have five-bay facades. The main blocks are one-room deep and have a double-cube form. The Taylor House, which is located near the center of the district, faces east at the intersection of Old Hill Road and Kings Highway North. The Nash House, one of the few set back from the road, is at the corner of Woodside Avenue, and it too faces east towards Kings Highway North. Both houses display later Federal or Federal Revival doorways with sidelights. The one on the Taylor House has a narrow frieze with repeating arched forms, and a projecting cornice that does not extend out over the flushboard panels that frame the surround on either side.

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Kings Highway North Historic District, Westport, Fairfield County, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 2

The 1769 Captain Nathan Burwell House at the north end of the district has an unusual facade (Inventory #53; Photograph #3). It is probable that its foreshortened second story, which has three single six-paned sash under the eaves, was added to the original one-story five-bay house. The doorway here, originally installed in the Federal period, was embellished with mutules and dentils after 1900. Samuel Lord built a four-bay three-quarter Colonial on the east side of the street about 1760 (Inventory #33; Photograph #4). With its wide overhanging eaves, the roof is a replacement, but the rest of the facade and its unadorned doorway are probably original. Another house across the street was built by Odediah Wright for his son, Dennis, about the same time (Inventory #39; Photograph #5). Its clearly Federal Revival doorway was added after 1915 by a later owner, architect Herbert Baer. Another remodeled Colonial at the corner of Edge Hill Lane was built by the Hurlbutts in 1797 (Inventory #1; Photograph #6). The wings and the dormers date from the 1870s, when the house was enlarged to be a school, the portico from the early 1900s. Two similar vernacular houses on lower Kings Highway North include one built about 1780 as a two-family residence (Inventory #s 12, 16; Photograph #7). The old barn and smokehouse at the rear appear to be contemporary with the house (Inventory #s 13, 14). Its neighbor, which has a broader end elevation, was built about 1830.

Many owners of these colonial period houses are buried in the King Street Cemetery, which was laid out in 1740 (Inventory #73; Photograph #8). Most of the graves, which include 17 soldiers who fought in the Revolution, are sheltered beneath a tree canopy. Plain markers of sandstone, some of which have tombstone arches, are sited in informal rows, and face both east and west. The other two graveyards in the center of the district are typical of their periods. In the older 1852 Christ Church Cemetery, most of the historic graves are marked with simple round- or segmental-arched stones (Inventory # 46). The historic markers in the Church of the Assumption Cemetery to the north are stylistically quite different. The stones there are more ornate in the Victorian manner and a number are obelisks or pedestals for statues.

The only example from the Federal period in the district employs a narrow colonial double-cube form and center-hall plan (Inventory #26; Photograph #9). It was built in 1812 as the main block to a mill, which now is an extended rear ell with roof dormers. It is likely that the main doorway and gable fanlights were elaborated or installed by an early twentieth-century owner.

The Greek Revival style is generally concentrated on Wright Street, which was not laid out until the 1830s. Three neighboring houses above the south side of the street, all built by the Wright family, have a gable-to-street orientation (Inventory #s 91, 93, 94; Photograph #10). The most stylish example, the 1849 William Wright House, has a full pediment, detailed with a later Palladian window, and a portico supported by chamfered posts on high bases, which shelters a doorway with sidelights (Inventory #93; Photograph #11). Several vernacular houses of this period on this street have the same orientation and characteristic roof pitch of the Greek Revival (Inventory #s 113, 115, 121; Photograph #12).

Greek Revival style elements appear on other neighborhood houses but play a secondary role. As evidenced by its doorway and first-floor pilasters, the Taylor House on the north side of the street was built as a Greek Revival, but its Second Empire style dates from 1868 when the tall mansard roof was added (Inventory #101; Photograph #13). Its elaborated bracketed roof dormers have flared pediments. Next door, a contemporary house built by George Dickerson is an unusual interpretation of the Italian Villa style (Inventory #106; Photograph #14). It also incorporates Greek Revival elements, particularly the facade porch with Ionic columns and the multipaned sidelights and transom at the door. Italianate features include the cupola, with its round-arched windows and

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Kings Highway North Historic District, Westport, Fairfield County, Connecticut

Section number 7 Page 3

bracketed roof, and the extended bracketed eaves. The double bullees in the frieze are unusual; only scattered examples of this feature are found in the region.

The extensive later remodeling of another example on Kings Highway North, the 1856 Gorham-Hart House, effectively conceals similar stylistic origins (Inventory #37; Photograph #15). The changes include extending the main roof to flare out over a two-story addition to the main block on the right, and a facade porch. Among the other added features are the large multipaned window at the second floor of the addition, which has a basket arch and lattice work below, and the fanlight in the facade gable, both of which have keyblocks. The same arched form is repeated on the addition's north side elevation, where it frames a large recessed window grouping at the second floor. There the same lattice work is used as a true balustrade. At the first floor, conventional windows are set within a slightly recessed arch on the wall.

The Annie Wood House, built in 1884 on the east side of this street, is the only example of the Stick style in the district (Inventory #111, Photograph #16). Essentially utilizing a cross-gable plan, the facade gable is sheathed with imbricated wood shingles, and patterned slate shingles are found on the side gable peaks. A delicate cast-iron period fence borders the roadside in front of the house.

Two houses designed by architect Charles Cutler on Kings Highway North typify the Colonial Revival style of the early twentieth century in the district. The two-story main block of the one he built for his own use in 1920 has a recessed two-story wing on the left and screened porch with a roof balustrade on the right (Inventory #42; Photograph #17). The facade displays a fully pedimented door surround and 12-over-12 windows. Cutler's studio is located to the rear (Inventory #43). The other Cutler house to the south has similar massing and scale, but displays a five-bay facade, twin interior chimneys, and 6-over-6 windows. Its facade is highlighted by a delicate gabled portico, which has a cove ceiling and is supported by doubled slender columns (Inventory #36; Photograph #18.) Another example nearby, which displays a portico with single columns, is more nearly Federal Revival in its style (Inventory #44). Among the numerous other examples of this style are two on Ludlow Road (Inventory #s 74, 75; Photograph #19). A cove-ceiling portico and a fanlight in the eyebrow window in the front slope of the roof are featured at #57. Its neighbor, the first house designed by Cutler in the district, displays a pedimented doorway with a fanlight.

Among the several Bungalows in the district is one at the corner of Ludlow Road and Kings Highway North (Inventory #79; Photograph #20). Its wraparound porch supported by columns is Colonial Revival in style, yet it utilizes a cobblestone foundation, a feature often associated with the Craftsman style. A Bungalow to the north has the typical multiple facade gables associated with a Craftsman version of this form (Inventory #30; Photograph #21). Its other characteristic features include shaped rafter tails and rake boards, as well as projecting roof plates. It is probable that the front porch, which has a continuous band of transom windows, was always enclosed with double casement windows. An unusual feature is the cutaway corner with window of the right-hand wing.

The complete inventory of contributing and non-contributing resources in the district follows. Dates of construction taken from the Kings Highway North Historic District Study Report and Westport Tax Assessor's records were generally confirmed by observations in the field. Tax records were also the source for recent remodeling dates. Since dates for outbuildings are not normally recorded in the tax assessor's records, those given are field estimates. Note: Only outbuildings of substantial size with foundations are included in the inventory.

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Kings Highway North Historic District, Westport, Fairfield County, Connecticut

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INVENTORY OF CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Inv. #	Address	Historic Name/Style/Type/Date	C/NC	Photo #
EDGE HILL LANE				
1.	6	HURLBUTT-COLEY HOUSE, Colonial/Federal, 1797/1877-78	C	6
2.	12	Cape, c. 1920	C	
3.	12	garage, 1960	NC	
KINGS HIGHWAY NORTH				
4.	37	19th-century cross-gable, 1876	C	
5.	37	garage, 1993	NC	
6.	38	former Shercrow School, c. 1900, remodeled 1966	C	
7.	39	modern house, 1956	NC	
8.	40	DENNIS WRIGHT HOUSE, vernacular, c. 1740, c. 1850	C	
9.	40	garage, c. 1930	C	
10.	41	DANIEL FREELOVE NASH HOUSE, Colonial saltbox, 1736	C	2
11.	44	CHANNING HARRIS HOUSE, Colonial Revival, 1908	C	
12.	45	Colonial, c. 1780, remodeled 1903	C	7
13.	45	small barn, c. 1800	C	
14.	45	smokehouse, c. 1800	C	
15.	46	LESLIE SNIFFEN HOUSE, Four-Square, 1914, remodeled 1979	C	
16.	49	vernacular, c. 1830	C	7
17.	49	garage, 1920	C	
18.	49A	vernacular, 1905	C	
19.	49A	garage, c. 1930	C	
20.	49B	vernacular, 1928	C	
21.	52	HURLBUTT-BROOKS HOUSE, vernacular c. 1850 (ta 1818)	C	
22.	52	garage, c. 1930	C	
23.	52	small house, c, 1850	C	
24.	53	Bungalow, c. 1930, remodeled 1940	C	
25.	53	garage, 1938	C	
26.	57	MARVIN MILL-DENNIS NASH HOUSE, Federal, c. 1750/1812	C	9
27.	57	barn, c. 1900	C	

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Kings Highway North Historic District, Westport, Fairfield County, Connecticut

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28.	63	Bungalow, c. 1920	C	
29.	64	vernacular, c. 1938	C	
30.	65	Craftsman Bungalow, c. 1920, remodeled 1980	C	21
31.	65	garage, c. 1920	C	
32.	66	Cape, 1958	NC	
33.	67	SAMUEL LORD HOUSE, Colonial, 1766 or 1776	C	4
34.	69	ARTHUR BETTS HOUSE, Tudor Revival, 1922	C	
35.	69	garage, c. 1922	C	
36.	75	FRANCIS CONVERSE HOUSE, Colonial Revival, 1922 (Architect: Charles E. Cutler)	C	18
37.	76	ANSON GORHAM-WILLIAM S. HART HOUSE, Greek Revival/Federal Revival, 1856/1907	C	15
		garage, 1909	C	
38.	76		C	
39.	78	OBEDIAH WRIGHT HOUSE, Colonial/Federal Revival, c. 1760	C	5
40.	78	garage, c. 1915	C	
41.	78	garage with attached studio, c. 1915	C	
42.	79	CHARLES E. CUTLER HOUSE, Colonial Revival, 1920, remodeled 1958 (Architect: Charles E. Cutler)	C	17
43.	79	CUTLER STUDIO, c. 1920, restored after fire 1958	C	
44.	83	Colonial Revival, 1919), remodeled c. 1960, 1979	C	
45.	--	Drill Ground, c. 1760-1850	C	
46.	---	CHRIST CHURCH SOCIETY CEMETERY, 1852	C	
47.	---	CATHOLIC CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION CEMETERY, c. 1900	C	
48.	93	Colonial Revival (gambrel), 1924	C	
49.	96	DAVID JUDAH HOUSE, Colonial Cape, c. 1760	C	
50.	102	Modern Colonial, 1952	C	
51.	103	Ranch, 1953	NC	
52.	103	garage, c. 1953	NC	
53.	104	CAPTAIN NATHAN BURWELL HOUSE, Colonial, 1769	C	3
54.	105	modern Colonial, 1953	NC	
55.	107	vernacular, c. 1880	C	
56.	107	garage/apartment, c. 1920	C	
57.	108	Ranch, 1948	C	
58.	108	garage, 1987	NC	

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Kings Highway North Historic District, Westport, Fairfield County, Connecticut

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59.	109	Colonial Revival, 1911	C	
60.	109	garage, c. 1930	C	
61.	111	Four-Square, 1915	C	
62.	111	garage, c. 1920, converted to residence	C	
63.	113	ALOIS FORGER HOUSE, Colonial Revival, 1925	C	
64.	113	garage/residence, c. 1925	C	
65.	115	DANIEL FORGER HOUSE, Colonial Revival, 1936	C	
66.	115	garage, c. 1940	C	
67.	116	Ranch, 1956	NC	
68.	117	WILLIAM BIDWELL HOUSE, vernacular, 1856, remodeled 1957	C	
69.	117	shed, c. 1920	C	
70.	119	BANKS BLACKSMITH SHOP, c. 1810 (addition 1891)	C	
71.	119	garage, c. 1940	C	
72.	120	Cape, 1948	C	
73.	---	KING STREET CEMETERY, established 1740	C	8
LUDLOW ROAD				
74.	51	Federal Revival, c. 1914, remodeled 1950 (architect: Charles E. Cutler)	C	19
75.	57	Federal Revival, c. 1915, remodeled 1992	C	19
76.	57	garage, c. 1930	C	
77.	71	vernacular, c. 1930, remodeled 1952	C	
78.	72	Colonial Revival, 1929, remodeled 1958	C	
79.	76	Craftsman, c. 1910	C	20
80.	76	garage, c. 1920	C	
NUTMEG LANE				
81.	1	Colonial Revival, c. 1900	C	
OLD HILL ROAD				
82.	1	LT. JOHN TAYLOR HOUSE, Colonial saltbox, c. 1730	C	1
83.	1	barns, c. 1900) with garage connector, remodeled 1989	C	
84.	4	Colonial Revival Cape, c. 1935	C	

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POST ROAD WEST

85. 172 WILLIAM S. JONES HOUSE. c 1860, moved/reconstructed 1989 C
86. 174 vernacular, c. 1860, moved/reconstructed 1989 C

WILTON ROAD

87. 107 JAMES HURLBUTT HOUSE, Colonial Cape, c. 1750, 1877 C
88. 109 ISAAC HURLBUTT HOUSE, Federal, c. 1820 C
89. 109 garage/shed c. 1920 C

WOODSIDE AVENUE

90. 5 Bungalow, c. 1912 C

WRIGHT STREET

91. 15 JUDSON P. WRIGHT HOUSE, vernacular Greek Revival, 1839 C 10
92. 15 garage, c. 1920 C
93. 21 MARY WRIGHT HOUSE, vernacular Greek Revival. c. 1845 C 10
94. 25 WILLIAM B. WRIGHT HOUSE, Greek Revival, 1849 C 10, 11
95. 27 vernacular, c. 1930 C
96. 27 barn/garage, c. 1930 C
97. 35 ZALMON SANFORD HOUSE, vernacular, c. 1852; portico, 1960 C
98. 35 studio, 1908 C
99. 41 CAPTAIN PETER BUCKLEY HOUSE, c. 1850, C
remodeled, c. 1927, c. 1960
100. 41 cottage (former cowshed), c. 1900 C
101. 46 EDWARD W. and EDMUND TAYLOR HOUSE, Greek Revival, c. 1840; C 13
Second Empire, 1868 C
102. 46 barn/studio, c. 1880 C
103. 46 shed, c. 1900 C
104. 49 HENRY E. JACKSON HOUSE, Federal, C
c. 1820/Neo-Grec, c. 1960
105. 49 garage, c. 1930 C
106. 54 GEORGE DICKERSON HOUSE, Italianate, 1863/c. 1865 C 14
107. 54 barn/garage, c. 1890 C
108. 56 vernacular, 1912 (setback) C

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Kings Highway North Historic District, Westport, Fairfield County, Connecticut

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109.	57	Colonial Revival, 1933	C	
110.	57	barn/carriagehouse, c. 1900	C	
111.	63	ANNIE WOOD HOUSE, Stick, 1884 (ta 1889)	C	16
112.	63	garage, 1970	NC	
113.	64	FREDERICK MOREHOUSE HOUSE, vernacular c. 1840, Federal Revival portico and rear addition, c. 1920	C	12
114.	64	garage (former wagonshed), 1920	C	
115.	67	CHARLES FOOTE HOUSE, c. 1855/c. 1870	C	
116.	67	carriagehouse/barn/apartment, c. 1900	C	
117.	71	Federal Revival, 1938 (architect: Charles E. Cutler)	C	
118.	73	Ranch, c. 1960	NC	
119.	74	AARON BENNETT HOUSE, vernacular, 1853, remodeled 1966	C	
120.	74	garage, c. 1930	C	
121.	80	ALLEN RENOUD HOUSE, vernacular, 1854; portico, c. 1960	C	
122.	80	garage, c. 1930	C	

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

Period of Significance

1736 - 1948

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Charles Cutler Inventory #s 36, 42, 74

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

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Kings Highway North Historic District, Westport, Fairfield County, Connecticut

Section number 8 Page 1**Statement of Significance**

The Kings Highway North Historic District is a significant historical and architectural entity which embodies the major stages of Westport history. A village of farmers at settlement, the district was directly associated with maritime development of the Saugatuck riverport and the formation of the town. As a prestigious early twentieth-century neighborhood, it reflects Westport's role as an artists' colony as well as a suburban haven for city dwellers. The district is characterized by a high degree of cohesiveness, which is reinforced by similarities of scale, setting, and style. Although Colonial and Colonial Revival architecture predominate, the district also contains representative examples of other major nineteenth- and twentieth-century architectural styles, which add variety to its streetscapes.

Historical Background and Significance

The path of the Old Kings Highway, first known as King Street, was laid out in 1672. Constructed at the behest of the governors of the New York and Connecticut colonies, it facilitated communication between New York and Boston. In Connecticut the road generally followed the east-west route traversed by Native Americans known as the Pequot Trail. In the Western Coastal Slope, it passed through some early settlements at Greenwich, Norwalk, and Fairfield. The section of the highway now in the district diverged to the north to ford the Saugatuck River upstream. The river then was the border between Fairfield and Norwalk; people who settled in the district on the west side were Norwalk proprietors and their descendants. King Street remained the major through route until the construction of the Post Road, which bypassed this section of King Street in the early nineteenth century to accommodate commercial wharves and storage facilities located nearer the mouth of the Saugatuck.

The eighteenth-century village encompassed by the district was first known as Taylortown for the many members of that family who settled there. One early site remains that is identified with this family: the 1730 house built by John Taylor in the center of the district at Old Hill Road (Inventory #82; Photograph #1). Seth Taylor established the drill ground for the local militia near the end of the French and Indian War (Inventory #45), which remained in use until after the Mexican War. Daniel Freelove Nash, a member of another family prominent in the district throughout its history, built his house about 1736 (Inventory #10; Photograph #2). It is said that it once served as a public house, or tavern. Another key family from the settlement period was the Wrights. Although extensively remodeled, part of the house at 40 Kings Highway North was built by Dennis Wright by the 1740s (Inventory #8), and a later Colonial was constructed for his son, Obediah, which remained in the family until at least 1865 (Inventory #39; Photograph #5).

During the Revolution, the King Street Cemetery, the eighteenth-century community burying ground, was fortified with cannon by the Norwalk militia, led by Benedict Arnold and Captain Osias Marvin (Inventory #73; Photograph #8). Their plan to attack British troops returning from the Danbury raid at nearby Saugatuck River ford was foiled, since Major General William Tyron, warned by a Tory sympathizer, crossed the river farther upstream.

The Wrights and the Nashes were among several Tory families in the district who took refuge on Long Island during the Revolution, but returned after the war. At that time the Nashes bought the Marvin grist- and sawmill. It was moved to the district by Dennis Nash from another site in Taylortown, perhaps as early as 1784. Now the rear ell of an 1812 house built by Nash, the mill once also served as a bakery, a most unusual dual function (Inventory #26; Photograph #9). It is said that flour ground there was baked in an large

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brick oven in the massive fireplace there.

Many villagers were involved in the coastal and West Indies trade after the war, either as farmers, merchants, or ships' captains. Wheat and other farm goods were shipped from the Saugatuck riverport well into the nineteenth century and roads were laid out in the district from Kings Highway to the river, including Edgehill Road in the 1770s, which ran to the Hurlbutts' dock as well as their family houses nearby. Hurlbutt sloops shipped farm goods to New York as early as 1798. Taylor Hurlbutt built his house on this road in 1797 (Inventory #1; Photograph #6). Earlier family houses built by James and Isaac Hurlbutt were located at the foot of Edgehill Hill on what much later became Wilton Road (Inventory #s 87, 88). Soon after Wright Street connected with the Post Road, several Wrights built on family land there (Inventory #s 91, 93, 94; Photograph #s 10, 11), as did the Taylors, who owned a house that they transformed into the Second Empire style (Inventory #101; Photograph #13. By the 1850s several homes there were associated with the maritime trade. The famous Westport onions, which had replaced wheat as the major crop, were carried on schooners owned by Captain Peter Bulkley (Inventory #99), and Captain Francis Bennet, who bought the Zalmon Sanford House in 1854 (Inventory #97). On their return voyages, ships' cargoes included coal, lumber, and granite for the local monument works.

Institutional development kept pace with the growth of Saugatuck, as Westport was known originally. New parishes were established on both sides of the river: an Episcopal Parish on the west side in 1831 in Taylortown and one for Congregationalists on the east side in 1832. Christ Church Episcopal was constructed in 1833 at the foot of Ludlow Road (then known as Church Street), largely due to the efforts of Daniel Nash. Used as a church until 1884, it then served as an inn until it was destroyed by fire in 1970. The Reverend William Frisbee, rector from 1848 to 1853, rented the house at 21 Wright Street (Inventory #93). Villagers still had to travel great distances to the centers of Norwalk and Fairfield to attend town meetings, record deeds, and pay taxes. These inconveniences led to the incorporation of Westport as a separate town in 1835, a process in which Nash also played a major role. In 1852 Christ Church bought land for its cemetery at the center of the district (Inventory #46). The Shercrow School still served the district as it had from settlement (Inventory #6), but by the late 1870s the Reverend James Edward Coley, grandson of the original builder, made additions to the Hurlbutt house on Edgehill lane in order to run a private school there (Inventory #1; Photograph #6).

With the decline of farming and the maritime trade in the late nineteenth century, farmland was subdivided for new houses in the district and older ones were remodeled, often in the Colonial Revival manner. Residents in this evolving suburban neighborhood included old families as well as prominent local citizens and newcomers to town. Annie Wood, daughter of Joseph Nash, built her new house next to her father's home (Inventory #111; Photograph #16). Edmund W. Taylor, an early president of the Westport Bank and Trust Company, lived on Wright Street in a home later owned by probate judge Daniel Bradley from 1906 to 1933 (Inventory #101; Photograph #13). Several other bank officials were later residents of the district. President Channing Harris built a house in the district in 1908 (Inventory #11), as did Leslie Sniffen, the treasurer, in 1914 (Inventory #15). Other local notables included Alois Forger, Westport selectman and tax collector for many years, who built a new house at the north end of the district in 1925 (Inventory #63). The house built for Frank Converse, the well-known inventor associated with the Goodyear Rubber Company, was designed by architect Charles Culter (Inventory #36; Photograph #18).

The district became home to several prominent people in this period. William S. Hart, an early silent film star, who bought the Anson Gorham House in 1907 for his mother and

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sister, made additions to the house by 1909 (Inventory #37; Photograph #15). Carolyn Bean Binyon was just one of several Westport artists who lived in the district. She added a studio to the David Judah House in the 1920s (Inventory #49). Local artists joined illustrator Marjorie Schuyler in her studio, a former onion barn attached to her house (Inventory #108), where she painted a mural of local scenes above the fireplace. Literary figures included Van Wyck Brooks, who wrote *The Flowering of New England* in 1930 when he lived in the Taylor Hurlbutt House (Inventory #21). John Chapman, drama critic and reporter for the *New York Daily News*, lived across the street in the Dennis Nash House (Inventory #26; Photograph #9). In 1928 R. V. Coleman, an editor at Scribners, prepared the *Dictionary of American Biography* while living at 1 Old Hill Road (Inventory #82; Photograph #1).

Architectural Significance

The Kings Highway North Historic District is an exceptionally integrated and representative demonstration of the dominance of Colonial Revival architecture in early twentieth-century suburban neighborhoods. Indeed, so many houses were built, remodeled, or embellished in the Colonial Revival style that the district appears to date from this period. This impression is conveyed especially by the Kings Highway North streetscape where almost half of its 32 historic houses were built by the early twentieth century and many earlier Colonials were updated in this period, adding to the Colonial Revival ambience.

Given that the Colonial Revival dominated American domestic and institutional architecture for more than 50 years, such a pervasive stylistic influence would be expected. However, its rather singular manifestation here is perhaps the district's most significant aspect. Instead of the range of stylistic interpretation and forms associated with this style, here architects and builders relied heavily and almost exclusively on design parameters initiated by local eighteenth-century builders. Even though there was a certain degree of stylistic standardization as well as a striving for historic authenticity after World War I, when most of these comfortable middle-class homes were produced, still they are remarkably similar in scale, proportion, and massing to earlier two-story Colonials in the district.

Several of these houses have been identified as the work of Charles E. Cutler (1881-1962). After graduating from Cornell Architecture School in 1906, he worked in New York and Montreal for Carrere and Hastings. Although he specialized in residential architecture after he came to Westport in 1914, Cutler is also known for his designs for the Westport Bank and Trust, the Greens Farms School, and the Fairfield Country Club. Among his residential commissions outside the district was the 1931 Georgian Revival House in Greens Farms he designed for Colonel James Hayes of Standard Oil, which later was owned by J. C. Penney.

The Francis Converse House and his own home in the district clearly relied on existing precedent (Inventory #s 36, 42; Photograph #s 18, 17). A comparison of these c. 1920 houses with several Colonials there supports this premise. In addition to the basic gable-roofed form, features in common include the low rafter plate with second-story windows close to the eaves, balanced facades, and often recessed wings. The most obvious models are the Daniel Freeloove Nash House (Inventory #10; Photograph #2) and the Wright House (Inventory #39; Photograph #5), but even with its off-center doorway, the Samuel Lord House has similar characteristics (Inventory #33; Photograph #4).

Within this narrow and derivative stylistic range, facade designs are individualized by a variety of doorway treatments. While fanlights over the door are common features, they

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are capped by different types of flat or gabled pediments, such as the doorway added to the Obediah Wright House (Inventory #39; Photograph #5) or the one on Charles Cutler's own house (Inventory #42; Photograph #17). Doorways also are sheltered by a variety of gable-roofed porticos generally with coved ceilings. The Federal Revival examples on Ludlow Road demonstrate both types (Inventory #s 74, 75; Photograph #19). Some of these features are authentically Colonial or Federal in origin. Such is the case with the fanlight and sidelights of the doorway of the Francis Converse House, which came from an old house in Ridgefield (Inventory #36; Photograph #17). An exceptionally broad portico supported by double columns was necessary to span the surround.

Departures from this theme, especially the presence of well-preserved Bungalows, add architectural variety of form, but even there the Colonial Revival influence is seen, as demonstrated by the verandah of the house at the corner of Ludlow Road and Kings Highway North (Inventory #79; Photograph #20). Another well-preserved Bungalow across the street is quite distinctive for its massing of gabled forms (Inventory #30; Photograph #21). Although a relatively common expression of a Craftsman Bungalow, in this neighborhood it becomes unique.

A more diverse range of architectural style is found on Wright Street, a well-preserved and exceptionally cohesive nineteenth-century neighborhood. Some early twentieth-century remodeling also took place there, which relates this street to the Colonial Revival theme of the district, but in general, the Greek Revival style and form predominated. Of particular interest there are two houses of this style that were literally transformed by highly individual remodelings. The Second Empire transformation of the Taylor House is perhaps the more visually dramatic (Inventory #101, Photograph #13). The stylistic change progresses upward, from the first-floor facade, which clearly reads as Greek Revival, and a highly sophisticated version at that, overhung by the second story that culminates in a mansard roof with very elaborate window and dormer treatments. In achieving its Italian villa form, the neighboring George Dickerson House reveals less about its Greek Revival origins (Inventory #106; Photograph #14). But it too is a highly individual expression of its style, particularly in the use of double bullseye windows in the frieze, a feature which has seen some scattered regional diffusion. Another villa in Weston, a town to the north on the Saugatuck River, also has these windows. It was associated with a company that had commercial ties to this riverport.¹ The last distinctive nineteenth-century expression of style on this street is the 1884 Annie Wood House (Inventory #111; Photograph #16). Remarkably well-preserved, this fine example of the Stick style, enhanced by the integrity of its Victorian setting and period cast-iron fence, makes a special contribution to this streetscape.

Endnote:

1. See the Bradley House in the Bradley Edge Tool Company Historic District, listed on the National Register November 22, 1995.

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9. Major Bibliographic References

"Preliminary Report of the Westport Historic District Study Committee, 20 January 1972."

"Report of the Westport Historic District Commission Regarding the Proposed Extension of the Kings Highway North Area Historic District." Westport, Connecticut, 1989.

Cutler-Wotten, Barlow. Interview May 18, 1998 concerning her father, architect Charles E. Cutler.

10. Geographical Data

UTM References:

1. 18 636820 4555000
2. 18 637000 4556140
3. 18 637140 4555110
4. 18 637070 4555800
5. 18 637150 4555380
6. 18 636860 4555260
7. 18 636790 4555030
8. 18 636640 4556190

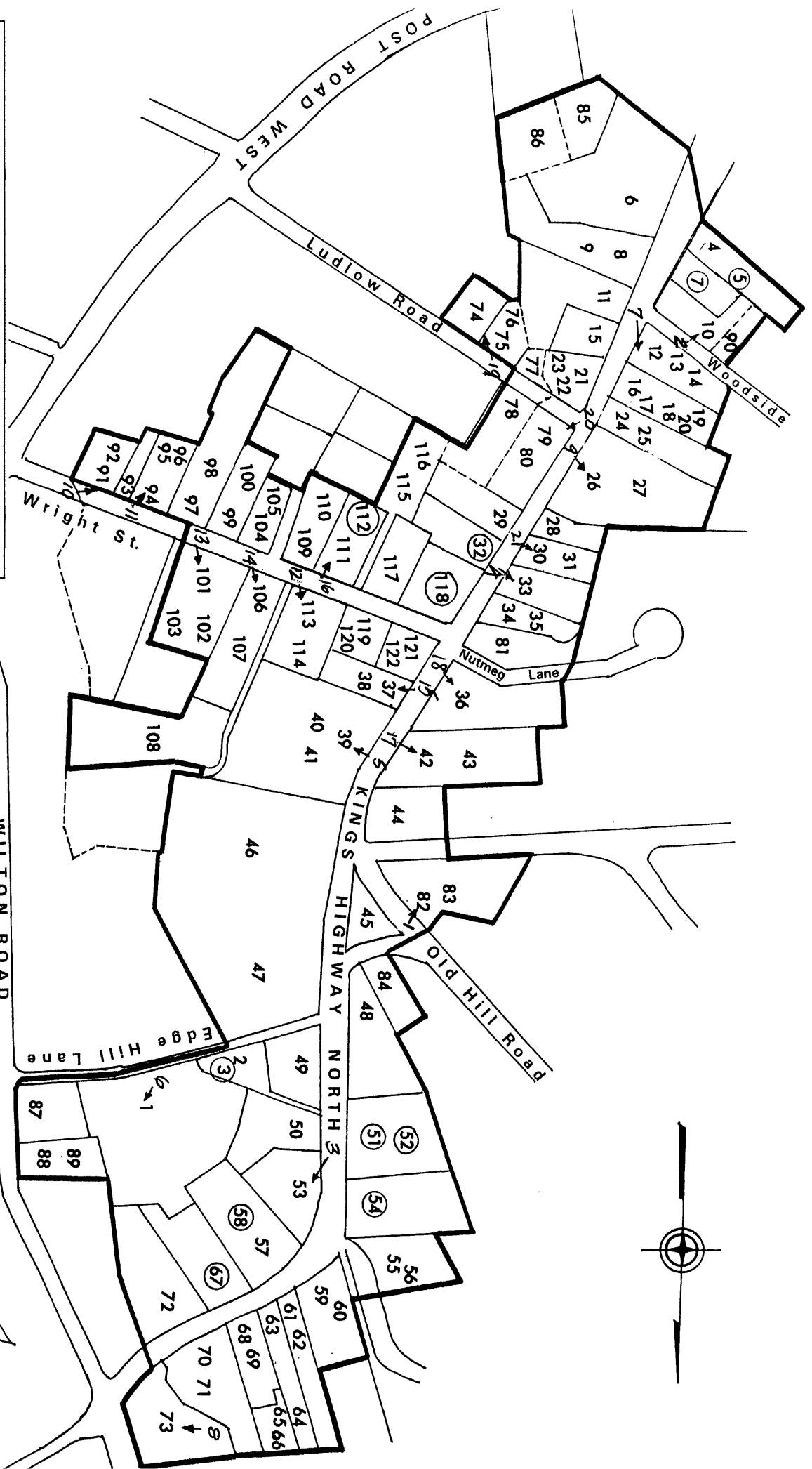
Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the district are shown on the attached map drawn to scale from Westport Tax Assessor's Map #5301.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries were selected to encompass the maximum number of contributing resources associated with the district's period of significance (c. 1730-1948). Since the district is exclusively residential, areas to the south and east that are zoned and used for modern commercial purposes were excluded. The architectural character of the district also changes to the west and north, where residential subdivisions generally date from after 1950.

The National Register district boundaries include the following contributing resources that currently are not part of the state-mandated local district (also called Kings Highway North Historic District): early twentieth-century houses and their associated outbuildings on Ludlow Street (Inventory #s 74 through 78) and Woodside Avenue (Inventory #90), and an outbuilding (Inventory #86) associated with a contributing resource on Post Road West that is already part of the local district (Inventory #85). These properties are included because they also are associated historically with the district's development and are similar in scale and style to the rest of the contributing resources in the district.



**KINGS HIGHWAY NORTH HISTORIC DISTRICT
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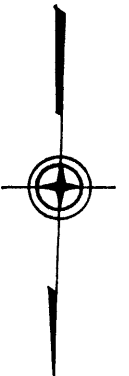
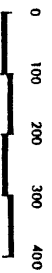
- # Contributing resource
- # Non-contributing resource
- # with arrow: photograph view

Bold Line: National Register District Boundary
Dashed Line: Local Historic District Boundary

Base Map: Westport Tax Assessor's Map # 5301
 Compiled by Cunningham Preservation Associates, LLC 7/97

SAUGATUCK RIVER

WILTON ROAD



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List of Photographs

Photographer: Cunningham Preservation Associates, LLC.

Date: 3/97

Negatives on file: Connecticut Historical Commission

1. LT. JOHN TAYLOR HOUSE, facing SW
2. DANIEL FREELOVE NASH HOUSE, facing W
3. CAPT. NATHAN BURWELL HOUSE, facing N
4. SAMUEL LORD HOUSE, facing NW
5. WRIGHT HOUSE, facing SE
6. HURLBUTT-COLEY HOUSE, facing NE
7. 45 & 49 Kings Highway North, facing NW
8. KING STREET CEMETERY, facing E
9. MILL-NASH HOUSE, facing NW
10. 15, 21, & 25 Wright Street, facing W
11. WILLIAM B. WRIGHT HOUSE, facing SW
12. FREDERICK MOREHOUSE HOUSE, facing NE
13. TAYLOR HOUSE, facing NW
14. GEORGE DICKERSON HOUSE, facing NW
15. GORHAM-HART HOUSE, facing E
16. ANNIE WOOD HOUSE, facing SW
17. CHARLES E. CUTLER HOUSE, facing NW
18. 75 Kings Highway North, facing NW
19. 51 & 57 Ludlow Road, facing SE
20. 76 Ludlow Road, facing NE
21. 65 Kings Highway North, facing W