

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

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This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic and Architectural Resources in Westport, Connecticut

B. Associated Historic Contexts

- I. Agriculture 1840 - 1920
- II. Education 1710 - 1940
- III. Coastal Development 1900 - 1940

C. Geographical Data

Town limits of Westport, Connecticut

Nominations submitted with this cover:

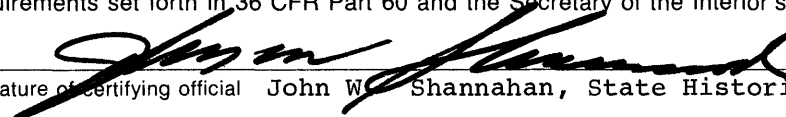
- Compo/Owenoke Historic District
- Mill Cove Historic District
- Greens Farms School

See attached map "Westport Multiple Properties Nomination" with properties and districts marked and labeled.

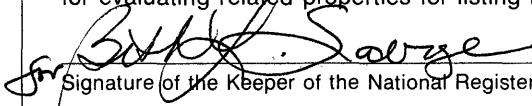
See continuation sheet

D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.


 Signature of certifying official John W. Shannahan, State Historic Preservation Officer Date 3/1/91
 State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.


 Signature of the Keeper of the National Register Date 4-19-91

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

Introduction

Westport is a coastal community on Long Island Sound in lower Fairfield County, the region known for preservation planning purposes as the Western Coastal Slope geographic historic context. The town was incorporated in 1835, formed from portions of Fairfield, Weston, Norwalk, and Old Saugatuck. The Saugatuck River, formerly the border between Fairfield and Norwalk, is the principal waterway. It flows from north to south and finds its outlet in the Sound, as do a number of smaller creeks and streams. Part of Connecticut's drowned coast formed in the retreat of the Great Glacier about 75,000 years ago, Westport's coastline characteristically undulates with a number of headlands, coves, and tidal embayments. Although some dredging has taken place in recent years, extensive salt marshes and small barrier beaches are still found along the town's coastline. Westport is located in the Northeast transportation corridor, and several major highways and the line of the former New York New Haven and Hartford Railroad, now serving Metro North and Amtrak, run through the town.

The oldest part of the community, the Fairfield parish of Maximus, later Bankside, was founded in 1648. Still later the area became known as West Parish of Fairfield, or Greens Farms. Although there was a limited trade with the West Indies after the Revolution, the area was basically a community of subsistence farmers throughout the colonial period. Typical domestic architecture in this period included three-bay Colonials and Cape-style houses, with the earliest remaining resources from this period dating from the the first third of the eighteenth century. Religious and educational development in parishes followed the broad patterns of the region and the state. The first meetinghouse was built in Greens Farms in 1711, followed by others later in the century. Although none remain today, several one-room schoolhouses were constructed within the present day town bounds.

By the 1830s, the subsistence farming economy began to give way to industrial development, chiefly centered in Saugatuck, and an external market economy based on agriculture and oystering. By the 1850s, a staple crop of onions was produced for export in Greens Farms, principally for the New York market, supplemented by the production of grain crops and vegetables, also for export. Although there were a number of small harbors and landings located in river estuaries, most produce was shipped from the town's principal port on the Saugatuck, and Southport in Fairfield. A number of Italianate villas remain and reflect the wealth of the farmers in this period. Small industries flourished, including a leather works, and several factories for making twine and buttons. Institutional development in the nineteenth century reflected the growth as well as the religious and ethnic diversity of the town. District schools were built to serve population centers and new churches were constructed by a more diverse religious community. Most of these churches were built in the growing commercial centers of Westport on the Post Road and across the river in Saugatuck.

As farming declined by the end of the nineteenth century, Westport began to develop as a resort community, with New Yorkers building seasonal estates on former farmland, both along the coast and in rural areas inland, part of a regional trend at this time. Summer colonies were established in the early twentieth century, principally at Compo Beach.

Westport experienced unprecedented suburban growth, particularly after World War II. Its population grew more than 400% between 1930 and 1980, to reach a maximum of 27,000 in 1970, accompanied by a boom in residential construction. Downtown Westport, which still contains wood-frame commercial buildings from the nineteenth century as well as

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key institutional and commercial masonry buildings from the early twentieth century, such as the former Arts and Crafts-style rubblestone town hall, was upgraded as a modern shopping center with a number of branches of New York stores. Behind the commercial buildings along the Saugatuck River, landfill was used for parking lots and new construction. Early-twentieth-century school buildings were enlarged to serve an increased school-age population created by the post-World War II baby boom. Westport residents commute by train and automobile to their jobs in New York and neighboring towns and cities. Beginning in the 1930s, a number of New York illustrators came to Westport and today the town is noted for its many distinguished resident writers, actors, and artists.

Historic Contexts

The resources of Westport can be divided into three distinct chronological phases, loosely based on each of its three centuries of development: early settlement and development of the eighteenth century; agricultural and industrial development of the nineteenth century; and resort development and suburban growth of the twentieth century. There are a number of associated historic contexts for these phases of development. For the purposes of this multiple resource nomination, only the following historic contexts and associated property types will be considered:

Contents

- I. Agriculture 1840-1920
 - A. Nineteenth-century farmhouses
 - B. Associated secondary structures
- II. Education 1710 - 1940
 - A. Twentieth-century brick elementary schools
- III. Coastal Development 1900 - 1940
 - A. Wood-frame seasonal dwellings
 - 1. Colonial Revival cottages
 - 2. Bungalows
 - 3. Tudor Revival cottages
 - 4. Associated secondary structures
 - B. Wood-frame year-round residences
 - 1. Coastal estates
 - C. Associated sites and structures
 - 1. Seaside parks/beaches
 - 2. Associated recreational buildings

E - I. Agriculture 1840 - 1920.

Westport was one of the few communities in Connecticut to sustain a viable farming economy in the nineteenth century, a period of agricultural decline statewide. Starting in the late eighteenth century, many farms in the state were abandoned and

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farming families left Connecticut to establish new farms on the western frontier of New York and Ohio. Crop land in Connecticut was turned over to grazing and orchards when the traditional grain crops of wheat, rye, corn, and flax had failed, either destroyed by blight and disease or eliminated by competition from western farmers, particularly after the completion of the Erie Canal in 1832. Westport had been blessed with good soils and level coastal farmland, in use since settlement, especially in the area known as Greens Farms. The modernization of its subsistence farming base that began in the 1840s was accomplished by the introduction of scientific farming practices, improved cultivation, and agricultural specialization, especially the introduction of a staple crop for export. Westport farmers had ready access to market and exceptional transportation networks, including a coastal trade established in the late eighteenth century and rail service after 1858. A new type of globe onion was introduced in the mid-nineteenth century and more than 75 farms specialized in this crop. More traditional grain crops such as wheat and corn continued to be grown for export as well. A tidal gristmill at Mill Cove to the east of Compo Beach remained in operation through the nineteenth century. Extensive salt marshes along the coast and in the river estuaries provided another cash crop harvested twice a year. Some farmers began to raise dairy herds or beef cattle; beef and milk were consumed locally and the hides processed at local tanneries. Large-scale market gardening was added to the agricultural economy, principally by European immigrants who came to town beginning in the late nineteenth century. Produce was shipped by rail and by market boats from the Saugatuck port on the river, Southport in Fairfield, and numerous small harbors and landings on the coast, supplying New York City and other East Coast ports.

By 1900, with the exception of market gardening and dairy farming, agriculture had generally declined in Westport, a process accelerated by resort and estate development in the town. Land prices rose and both coastal and inland farms were sold off for development for seasonal estates beginning in the 1880s. Some former farmhouses became summer inns or boarding houses, and along with new resort hotels, received an annual influx of summer visitors. Because recreational facilities were improved on Westport's beaches by the 1890s and made accessible by horse cars and later by trolley lines, farms nearby were developed into resort communities. In one notable case, the David Bradley Farm at Compo Beach was subdivided into small lots for seasonal cottages.

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Section number E Page 4 Property Type I. B. Associated secondary structures

Description: Wood-frame barns, carriage houses, and sheds associated with type I. A. All of these remaining gable-roofed buildings have been converted to new uses, including seasonal cottages and garages.

Significance: These associated farm buildings, which predate the resort development of the Compo area, are architecturally significant as representative agricultural types; only one barn still has primary historic significance as a nineteenth-century secondary building with agricultural associations. The significance of the rest of the buildings which have been converted to residential use lies in their association with resort development in the twentieth century.

Registration requirements: To qualify for the National Register, these buildings must retain their characteristic form and materials, which is the case of one barn that is now a garage for a residential property. In their modification to residences, the rest of these buildings have lost their distinguishing characteristics as secondary farm buildings. In appearance and function they are classified under Historic Context III, Property type 4.

E - II. Education 1714 - 1940

As was customary in the colonial period, one-room schools were built and staffed by the town parishes. By 1721 there were three such schools within the present day town bounds of Westport. Although schools became the responsibility of town governments after 1797, several schools in Westport were run by church societies until 1845, despite the fact that the church had been disestablished by the new state constitution in 1818. Wood-frame schoolhouses continued to be built into the nineteenth century, part of the system of district schools that prevailed in the state at that time. They included a Greek Revival-style school on Morningside Drive which began as a private secondary academy run by Ebenezer Banks Adams. In the 1880s it became a public district school. Several other schools remain that have been converted to residential use, including the 1812 Shecrow School and one on Cross Highway which still functioned as a school in the 1890s. Several schools in Saugatuck include the wooden Bridge Street School and the circa 1900 Saugatuck School. Although Westport had less than 2000 people in the late nineteenth century, it built a high school in 1884, as did many towns and cities in this period as part of the general educational reform movement of the day. Staples High School was funded by a donation to the town by Horace Staples, a wealthy Westport businessman. Another philanthropist, Edward T. Bedford, also made gifts to the town for educational purposes. He helped fund several buildings in the twentieth century, including the two-room wood-frame Greens Farms School on Clapboard Hill Road, which was later expanded to four rooms. Although it was built as a neighborhood school, a horse-drawn omnibus brought children there from as far away as the Sturges highway. In winter the carryall was transferred to runners. By the 1920s,

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new schools were needed to accommodate the increasing number of school-age children in the town. Several brick buildings, each designed for about 200 children in grades 1-8, were constructed. Both Greens Farms School and the Bedford School near the town center, which were built in this period, were partially funded by donations from Edward T. Bedford. In the post-World War II period, temporary classrooms and eventually permanent additions were needed to deal with overcrowded conditions in the schools. With declining enrollments in the late 1970s, however, several schools were converted to new uses. The Classical Revival Bedford School now serves as the town hall and the Tudor Revival Greens Farms School as an arts and senior citizens' center. A number of the 34 artworks and murals produced under the Art Committee of the Works Progress Administration (WPA) during the Great Depression have been preserved in the community's schools.

Property Type II - A: Brick elementary schools

Description: Brick elementary schools, often designed by architects, were constructed in Westport in the 1920s in the Colonial Revival, Classical Revival, and Tudor Revival styles. Two- and one-half-story buildings with high exposed foundations, load-bearing brick walls, and gabled roofs, they are generally rectangular in form. Classical and Colonial Revival-style features include pediments, porticos, and applied detail such as modillions. The one Tudor Revival-style school employs steep gables and originally a slate roof. All display banks of windows with operating wooden sash. Compatible brick additions were added to all of the schools in the 1950s.

Significance: The brick elementary schools, which are historically significant for their association with the development of education in Westport in the twentieth century, are architecturally significant stylistically and for their exceptional integrity.

Registration Requirements: To qualify for the National Register, these schools must have retained their integrity of design, workmanship, materials, and association. Additions to these buildings which are less than 50 years old must be compatible in style and materials and not have compromised the integrity of the original building. Alterations to the interior must respect the original layout and floorplan; some of the distinctive interior architectural features must have been retained.

E - III. Resort Development 1900 - 1940

Although the tidal flats and embayments were harvested for oysters and clams, as they had been by Native Americans prior to settlement by Europeans, Westport's coastline was generally undeveloped until the late nineteenth century. Beaches had been utilized for recreation, but there was no public transportation to the shore or recreational facilities for bathing. There were several coastal farms and an operating tidal grist-mill, but most residential development in this area took place after 1900.

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As transportation to Westport's shore became more available after the Civil War, recreational and residential development began. Horse-drawn wagons carried townspeople to Compo Beach beginning in the 1870s. Streetcar lines ran to the beach by about 1890. A pavilion and bathhouses were built there by a local farmer, David Bradley. Seasonal estates were constructed near the coast as early as 1870 on Beachside Avenue, Longshore, and the Compo. Roads were laid out and seasonal cottages began to be built about 1910 fronting the beach at Compo, Owenoke, and Mill Cove, eventually becoming seasonal residential communities which continued to grow until about 1935. By 1915 the town had begun to develop a beachfront park at Cedar Point just at the west end of Compo Beach, which included bathing facilities and, later, a yacht club and marina. The historical associations of Compo Beach were recognized by the installation of memorials. The cannon installed on Cedar Point and the Minuteman statue erected at the intersection of Compo Beach and Compo Beach South roads commemorate the resistance of the town at the time of the 1778 attack of the British at this location during the Revolution.

Property Type III-A. 1 Colonial Revival cottages

Description: A number of Colonial Revival-style cottages were constructed in the beach communities of Westport. They are all wood-frame construction with shingled or clapboarded walls. Some were originally built with a pier foundation which has been replaced by a masonry perimeter foundation with a crawl space. They were built in several different forms and roof types, producing a variety of subtypes as follows:

- 1a. Georgian gable-roof two-story, with and without a facade pent roof.
- 1b. Cape, sometimes modified with a partial facade porch.
- 1c. Gambrel-roofed with roof dormers (see also Bungalows).
- 1d. Hipped-roof (also known as Four-Square).

Note: Although some cottages were quite large and could be called houses, the common historic generic term is used here.

Significance: In their stylistic variety these Colonial Revival cottages are architecturally significant representative examples of a seasonal type and style which that not only illustrate the universal popularity of the style in this period but directly convey its early-twentieth-century association with resort development in Westport.

Registration requirements: To qualify for the National Register, these buildings must have enough stylistic and structural integrity to convey their early-twentieth-century association. Although many of the buildings which are included in this property type have undergone some degree of alteration, such as the partial enclosure of porches, new fenestration, additions, or in a few cases artificial siding, most have retained sufficient integrity of design, form, materials and workmanship to still contribute to the character of a historic district. Those buildings which have been substantially

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altered, i. e., loss of the distinguishing form, materials, or detail that characterize this property type, are considered non-contributing.

Property Type III - A. 2 Bungalows

Description: One- and- two-story bungalows are the second most common property type in the seasonal residential communities in Westport. They display the traditional facade porch, either integrated with the main roof in the ridge-to-street form, or attached with a hip-roof in the gable-to-street form. Most bungalows are wood-shingled and some display an Arts and Crafts influence in a few simple details such as exposed rafter ends. Some of the larger bungalows utilize a broad gambrel roof and/or a Colonial Revival-style porch.

Significance: Although simply detailed, these bungalows are architecturally significant for their variety of form and degree of preservation. They are historically significant for their association with seasonal residential development in the twentieth century in Westport.

Registration requirements: To qualify for the National Register, these buildings must have enough stylistic and structural integrity to convey their early-twentieth-century association. Although many of the buildings which are included in this property type have undergone some degree of alteration, such as the partial enclosure of porches, new fenestration, or in a few cases the application of artificial siding, most have retained sufficient integrity of design, form, materials, and workmanship to still contribute to the character of a historic district. Those buildings which have been substantially altered, i. e., loss of the distinguishing form, materials, or detail that characterize this property type, are considered non-contributing.

Property Type III - A. 3 Tudor Revival cottages

Description: Tudor Revival cottages are less common in Westport's seasonal communities. Most display stuccoed walls, trim boards to imitate half-timbering, and slightly steeper pitched gables. Only a few examples are completely constructed of wood and/or sheathed with wood shingles. Several display rolled eaves of asphalt shingle to simulate a thatched roof.

Significance: Architecturally significant as well-preserved examples of this style, the Tudor Revival cottages are also historically significant for their association with seasonal residential development in the twentieth century in Westport.

Registration requirements: Because of their relative rarity, to qualify for the National Register, these buildings need to meet only minimum standards of stylistic and structural integrity. However, most have such an exceptional degree of integrity of design, form, materials, and workmanship that they are major contributors to the character of a historic district.

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Property Type III - A. 4 Associated secondary structures

Description: The majority of associated secondary structures are small wooden garages set to the rear of the small lots. The more common roof forms are gable and hip. A few garages were originally barns.

Significance: Although the garages are secondary structures, they are significant for their association with the development of the automobile as the primary mode of transportation, a period which coincided with and facilitated the growth of seasonal beach communities in Westport.

Registration requirements: To qualify for the National Register, these secondary buildings must have structural integrity and have retained their characteristic form. Most of the buildings in this property type meet these standards and still convey their early-twentieth-century association, thus contributing to the character of a historic district.

Property Type III - C. 1 Seaside parks/beaches

Description: These waterfront sites contain natural and manmade features, including beaches, breakwaters, paved and landscaped landfill areas, and yacht clubs.

Significance: These sites are primarily significant for their association with coastal and resort development in the twentieth century in Westport.

Registration requirements: To qualify for the National Register, these sites must be distinguishable entities that have been maintained and developed for recreational purposes and have a long continuous association with resort development in the early twentieth century.

Property Type III - C. 2 Associated recreational buildings

Description: This property type encompasses a wide range of building type and function. Included are bathing pavilions, lifeguard stations, yacht clubhouses, and the associated smaller structures used for such purposes as storage.

Significance: These associated buildings are primarily significant for their association with the development of seaside parks and beaches in the early twentieth century in Westport.

Registration requirements: To qualify for the National Register, these buildings must be permanent structures built primarily for recreational purposes in the early twentieth century which have retained their integrity of form, function, and detail.

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type Nineteenth-century farmhouses (I. A.)

II. Description

Wood-frame farmhouses built in the last half of the nineteenth century in the Compo area are generally vernacular interpretations of the Queen Anne style. They can be characterized by the use of complex massing of forms and the use of pediments, gables, dormers, and turrets.

III. Significance

These farmhouses predate the resort development of the Compo and reflect the prosperity of late nineteenth-century agriculture in the area. They are architecturally significant as representative examples of late nineteenth-century vernacular domestic architecture.

IV. Registration Requirements

To qualify for the National Register, these buildings must retain enough stylistic and structural integrity to convey their nineteenth-century association. Although the few buildings which are included in this property type have undergone some degree of alteration such as the partial enclosure of porches, or new fenestration, they have retained sufficient integrity of materials and workmanship to contribute to the character of a historic district.

See continuation sheet

See continuation sheet for additional property types

G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

See continuation sheet

H. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- State historic preservation office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency

- Local government
 University
 Other

Specify repository: Westport Town Hall, Westport Connecticut

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Historical and Architectural Surveys

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G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

An intensive townwide survey was carried out in Westport in 1988. Data was collected in the field and transcribed on standard Connecticut Historical Commission inventory forms. Supplemental historical research on each building and the historical development of the town was compiled from primary and secondary sources available in the Westport Historical Society, the Westport Library, and the Connecticut State Library.

The historic contexts for this multiple resource study were developed from the 1988 survey and the major regional themes identified and described in Historic Preservation in Connecticut, Volume I, Western Coastal Slope: A Historical and Architectural Overview written by the author of the nomination in 1989-1990. Geographic areas surveyed for the nomination were identified by field survey in consultation with the Westport Historic District Commission and the staff of the Connecticut Historical Commission and generally based on survey recommendations for district formation. District boundaries were drawn to include the maximum number of surviving contributing resources associated with the selected historic contexts.

The typology for significant property types for each context was based on three primary criteria: function, style, and association. The requirements for integrity were established by a comparative analysis in the field of the condition of each property type. For districts, buildings were identified as contributing or non-contributing based on a comparative assessment of the condition of similar property types within the district boundaries. Dates of construction were obtained from tax assessor's records and confirmed in the field to verify that buildings were constructed during the period of significance of the district. Consideration was given to the relative rarity of a property type with corresponding adjustments made in registration requirements. In a few cases, buildings antedated the period of significance but were later altered and derive their significance from their present style and appearance. These include nineteenth-century houses that were later altered in the Colonial Revival style as well as outbuildings, such as barns or carriage houses, that were converted to seasonal cottages. In the case of the individual nomination of Green Farms School, an evaluation of integrity was based on a comparison with all other buildings of the same property type in the town for architectural style, workmanship, degree of alteration, and historic association.