

DATA SHEET

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED DEC 9 1975

DATE ENTERED

JUL 6 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC  AND/OR COMMON  
\* \* \* Guilford Historic Town Center

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: See Site Plan Map and Item #7  
CITY, TOWN: Guilford  
STATE: Connecticut  
VICINITY OF: 73- Robert W. Haines  
COUNTY: New Haven  
CODE: 00

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC ACQUISITION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
			<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
			<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: Multiple Public and Private  
STREET & NUMBER: Town of Guilford  
CITY, TOWN: Guilford  
STATE: Connecticut

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Town Hall  
STREET & NUMBER: Park Street  
CITY, TOWN: Guilford  
STATE: Connecticut

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: Historic American Buildings Survey  
DATE: 1941-50  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress  
CITY, TOWN: Washington, D.C.

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Guilford Historic Town Centre is an area of approximately four square miles in Guilford, Connecticut. The Historic Town Centre is bounded on the west by the West River; on the North by the Connecticut Turnpike (I-95); on the East by the East Creek, and on the South by Long Island Sound.

The Guilford Historic Town Centre contains over 700 structures of various age, design and function. The majority of the structures are residential, although commercial uses are found along several principal thoroughfares. The topography in the district is relatively uniform with no major elevational changes. Over 250 acres of undisturbed tidal wetlands are within the area along the West River, East Creek, and along the shoreline proper. The residential population of the area at the time of the 1970 decennial census was approximately 2,700.

Circulation within the Historic Area is dominated by three principal arteries. East-West traffic is primarily on the Boston Post Road (U.S. Route 1) and secondarily on Boston Street. The Boston Post Road is also the locus of an assortment of commercial uses mostly oriented to retail trade. North-south traffic is focused on Church Street (State Route 77) which connects the Turnpike and Route 1 to the Guilford Green (also a locus of public and commercial uses) and then south via Whitfield Street to the shore, beaches and the Town Marina.

The boundaries of the Historic Centre, with the exception of the Turnpike on the north, are coterminous with the boundaries of "Guilford Borough," a political subdivision which was in existence from 1815 to 1939. It is an area of many contrasts and remarkable beauty and charm. It is very much a modern, thriving community with residential, commercial, governmental and recreational uses harmoniously integrated to create a complex web of activity. The uniqueness of this community center is produced by the rich mixture of historic structures in the context of a beautiful natural environment which functions as a place to live, work and play.

Both the physical and the human environment are, to a great degree, centered around the Guilford Green, a 7.7 acre square of open space, originally inspired by the Green, part of the nine squares, at New Haven. This Green has historically served as the focal center of the Town, despite the pull of automobile oriented commercial uses along the Boston Post Road. The diverse mixture of land uses surrounding the Green include the Town Hall, the Public Library, churches, shops, a savings bank, professional offices, and both multi-family and single-family homes. From the Green, roads lead north, south, east, and west, and settlement has occurred in all four directions giving the Town a compact radial pattern of development rather than linear.

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On the east and west the Historic Town Centre is bounded by areas of tidal marsh which provide a natural backdrop to the man-made environment. On the south this open character is reinforced by the vistas to Long Island Sound.

Along this shorefront are a concentration of recreational uses including town beaches, nature preserves and two marinas. Other commercial uses, particularly professional offices are found scattered along Church Street, State Street, and facing the Green. With the exception of the automobile oriented retail uses along the Post Road, these newer activities utilize older structures and are harmoniously integrated into the fabric of the historic streetscape.

The historic environment of this area was, of course, originally created by the early settlers resulting in many historic structures distributed throughout the Centre. Colonial and Federal Period houses make up the majority of these structures. Colonial houses are located primarily on Broad Street, Fair Street, State Street and Boston Street. Federal houses dominate the man-made environment around the Green and are also found on Broad Street. Colonial houses with Greek Revival modifications, notably a doorway in one case and a porch in another, are found on Fair Street and State Street. More opulent homes began to be built in the mid 19th century, including representative of the Italianate and Italian Villa Style and the Second Empire or "Mansard" style. Two notable examples of the "Mansard" style are located at the north end of the Green. The architecture of the District is as noted, dominated by the Federal and Colonial styles, although 19th century and 20th century buildings add diversity to the man-made environment. These historic buildings are used today for both commercial and residential purposes, primarily the latter. Virtually all are occupied and maintained in good physical condition.

The Historic Town Centre contains several commercial and institutional buildings which are of historic importance and contribute significantly to the environment of the community. Notable among these are three churches on the Green. At the north end of the Green, the First Congregational Church was constructed in 1829. The church and steeple form a strong visual focus, as well as contribute significantly to the New England village atmosphere. A few years later on the east side of the Green, the Episcopal Church was constructed in the Gothic Revival style. In 1844 the Greek Revival style was embodied in another Church of Christ the Scientist. An interesting example of early industrial architecture is the Spencer Foundry, constructed after the Civil War, which is on Fair Street surrounded by Colonial and Federal period homes.

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The Guilford Historic Town Centre is not dominated by any particular architectural style, nor by any single outstanding topographical or landscape feature. The Town, while undoubtedly late Colonial and Federal in character, is more diverse than that. Furthermore, the architecture and streetscape are enriched and strengthened by the natural setting, particularly the tidal marshes, street trees, and the Green. Finally, the Town Centre is a living community, not a museum, and, while maintaining the historic tradition, continues to grow and change.

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The boundaries of the Guilford Historic Town Center include the historic areas of the Borough of Guilford but exclude the major intrusive elements along the Boston Post Road (U.S. 1). This section of U.S. 1 was laid out in the 1930's and is lined with modern shopping plazas. South Union Street, south of Boston Street, is a 1950's and 1960's residential area which is also excluded from this nomination.

The boundary includes the historic areas of the town. Large expanses of salt meadow occupy the eastern, southern, and western perimeters of the nominated area. These salt meadows were a valuable resource which were exploits by Guilford's farmers from the days of settlement.

Two small factory complexes are located on the edge of the marsh at the western side of the district. The Emeloid Corporation, at the corner of South Fair and High streets, consists of 19th century structures and some modern buildings. Kenyon Marine is located near a high filled embankment which obscures it from Old Whitfield Street.

The Guilford Historic Town Center contains approximately 640 buildings

<u>Period</u>	<u>Number of Buildings</u>	<u>% of Total Buildings</u>
1639 - 1669	7	1
1700 - 1750	22	3.4
1751 - 1799	48	7.5
1800 - 1850	110	17.2
1851 - 1899	75	11.7
1900 -	377	58.9

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GENERAL DISCUSSION OF GUILFORD'S NEIGHBORHOODS WITHIN THE OLD BOROUGH

The Green:

The central feature in the town center is the large open green. It is surrounded by 18th and 19th century commercial and residential structures, four churches and the Town Hall (Photo 30).

West Central:

To the south and west of the Green, along the spine and west of Whitfield Street is a basically residential area with some eighteenth and nineteenth century houses, the Mason's building, which was a Roman Catholic Church until ten years ago, and an 1890's firehouse which is still in use (Photo 20). In the middle of this part of town is the old toy factory with salt marshes beyond. Near Jones Bridge, on the corner of River and Fair Streets, is the old trolley barn (Photo 24) which served the trolley lines of Guilford. Later it was a bus barn and presently is a small manufacturing facility.

South of the Tracks:

In addition to the Kenyon Marine Building (Photo 21) are th

*This replaces old page 6*

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Guilford Marina on West River, a small, private facility, and the Guilford Sluice Dock, a Town facility, where East Creek and East River meet. Guilford Point, most active some 80 years ago, is being rebuilt as a planned residential community. Three restaurants are located in this scenic, recreational area, as well as the now defunct railroad station and facilities. Some of these are now rented for other uses, which is helping to preserve particularly the station and the repairs facilities. The old, round water tower should also be preserved.

East Central:

The Henry Whitfield House (Photo 7) is the most notable building in this area. Beyond it is the large field owned by the Guilford Agriculture Society used for their Annual Fair, and leased to other groups for special events. A rocky, wooded ridge lies between the Fairgrounds, bounded on the east by Lovers Lane, and South Union Street on which is located Leete School (Photo 23). This is a new residential area, contrasted with the older one along Boston Street, and an area immediately north of homes built 50 to 75 years ago on quiet, residential streets. In this area is also a foundry, the Town Public Works garage (Photo 22), a few shops, a grocery market and a fire station along with the Highland House and the Griswold House and Museum.

North of Post Road:

The eastern portion of this neighborhood is made up largely of fields for truck gardening and a greenhouse (Photo 29). The westerly part is dominated by a high, rocky ridge, is largely commercial along the Post Road (Photos 27, 28) and residential to the north. The northwest portion is the location of some of Guilford's few apartments (two story), its housing for the elderly (one story) and a contemporary, small

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condominium just south of the Turnpike.

Broad St.-Fair St.:

Off the northwest corner of the Green is a neighborhood containing many of the finest early residences in town. Spencer's Foundry (Photo 16) continues to operate in the middle of this area. The neighborhood includes a department store with several buildings on one corner and service stations on another. Several, small commercial activities also are included (Photo 25), as well as the Community Center, once an elementary school (Photo 19).

MODERN INTRUSIONS WITHIN THE OLD GUILFORD BOROUGH

Adams Middle School ("Jr. high Sch" on U.S.G.S. quadrangle):

The original Guilford High School, constructed in the 1920's, took over for the Institute, now used by the Shore Line Times Publishing Co. The high school building is a typical brick, Georgian style building of the period. When it was changed to the Junior High School in 1956, a number of changes and additions were made which, although functionally useful, did not enhance the building's appearance. In 1975, the complex was expanded and the design of the additions was altered to reflect the basically Georgian style of the main block.

Leete School:

The Calvin Leete School was opened in 1949 in a new, single story, contemporary brick building. The building is a very functional, but not very charming elementary school complex, but it is in a location in which it does not detract from the early buildings on Boston Street to the north.

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Pinchbeck Greenhouses:

Between the two schools lies one of the longest continuously operated greenhouses in the country, operated by three generations of rose growers. They may be seen from the Turnpike to the north, and U.S. 1 to the south, across fields, and are of definite visual interest.

Guilford Plaza:

On the Post Road, a typical highway shopping plaza was built in 1972.

1057-69 Boston Post Road:

This is a much smaller shopping center which was built in 1958 for a grocery and five lesser shops, with a later branch bank addition. It is a typical, speculative string of buildings.

Old Toy Factory:

Most recently, this was occupied by Emeloid Company, fabricator of most of the credit card blanks in the country, located at the outside corner of South Fair and High Streets. This is a typical two story, brick factory building, as found all over New England. This small factory sits quietly in a residential neighborhood.

Kenyon Marine:

This factory is a one and two story complex, but was built largely in the fifties. Located, as it is, south of the tracks and backing onto the salt marshes, it is not particularly visible and has little impact on the general appearance of the Town.

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Community Center:

This was an elementary school until 1967. A one-story, brick, school type building built in 1922, it was converted to a Community Center for the town, with activities mainly for youths and the elderly.

Guilford Town Hall:

The original building photos show an asymmetrical Romanesque Revival design characteristic of the late Victorian age. Drastically altered in the late 1940's to its present general appearance, only the barest vestiges of its former robust design are visible today. The Architect's design of 1947 for the West front embodying a classical pediment was not carried out correctly, seriously weakening the effort to convert the facade to the then popular "Georgian" design. The difference in scale and proportion of the two periods made the attempted conversion to a more socially acceptable appearance rather unsuccessful.

Additional modernization and expansion completed in 1975 have changed the overall appearance very little on the principal facades. Dormers added to help convert previously unused attic spaces to new offices have added scale and interest to the exterior, while providing interiors of an open, contemporary feeling more characteristic of today's esthetic.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Guilford Historic Town Centre is significant as a modern thriving community in which a substantial portion of its architectural heritage has been preserved. The community exists in a relatively undisturbed natural coastal environment, but is subject to pressure for change. This change could be positive or negative depending on responses of the community, both from its officials and its private citizens.

Guilford was first settled in 1639 by a group of English Puritans. Settlement occurred in the area bounded by the West River and East Creek along the shore. The Reverend Henry Whitfield, leader of the group, constructed his stone house on what is now Old Whitfield Street and the house today, maintained as a museum, is thought to be one of the oldest in America. The large central Green was established at this time, inspired by New Haven's Green and has been maintained, with only minor encroachments ever since. Although hopes to establish Guilford as a major mercantile port were unsuccessful, the town began its modest growth with an economy based on shellfishing and agriculture. Despite a minor boom between 1750 and 1812 in the shipbuilding industry and related maritime industries, Guilford grew very little until the mid 20th century and is no doubt the principal reason for the preservation of its atmosphere of an earlier time.

Guilford's development in the late 19th and early 20th century was basically that of a small agricultural town. Several foundries built after the Civil War served to diversify the economy to a modest extent. Commercial development in the town was devoted to serving the needs of the farming people. This need resulted in the construction of stores and banks, a notable example being the Guilford Trust Company building constructed in 1912 in the Beaux Arts style at the south end of the Green.

While the large number of structures of historic interest contribute to the value of this area as an historic place, its real significance is in the way these buildings relate harmoniously to each other and to the natural landscape to create an environment illustrative of 300 years of history. The value of this environment is further enhanced by the fact that it is today a thriving community in a very human sense.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Garvan, A.N.B., Architecture and Town Planning in Colonial Connecticut, 1951.

Guilford Historic District Study Committee, Guilford, Connecticut: Its Green and Its Historic Buildings, Guilford, 1974.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3.010

UTM REFERENCES

A	19	60221810	4573980	B	19	60221810	4570670	
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	
A	C	19	605940	4573980	D	19	605940	4570670
		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See Item #7 and Site Plan Map

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Stephen J. Raiche, National Register Program Coordinator

ORGANIZATION

Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

59 South Prospect Street

TELEPHONE

203-566-3005

CITY OR TOWN

Hartford, Connecticut 06106

STATE

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

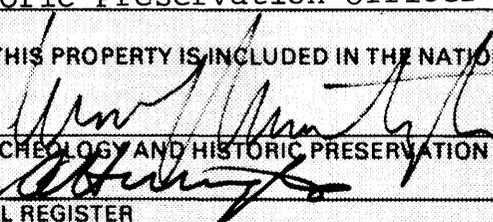
DATE

8/29/75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Active



DATE

7/16/76

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE

6-25-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Guilford Tercentenary Celebration Committee, Proceedings at the Celebration of the 300th Anniversary of the Settlement of Guilford, Connecticut 1639-1939, 1939.

Helander, Joel E., Guilford Long Ago (2 Volumes), Guilford, 1969.

Hubbard, Charles, Old Guilford, Guilford, 1939.

Kelly, J. Frederick, Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, New York, 1963.

Smith, R.D., The History of Guilford, Connecticut From its Settlement in 1639, 1877.

State of Connecticut, Dept. of Finance & Control, Office of State Planning, Proposed, A Plan of Conservation & Development for Connecticut, Hartford, January, 1973.

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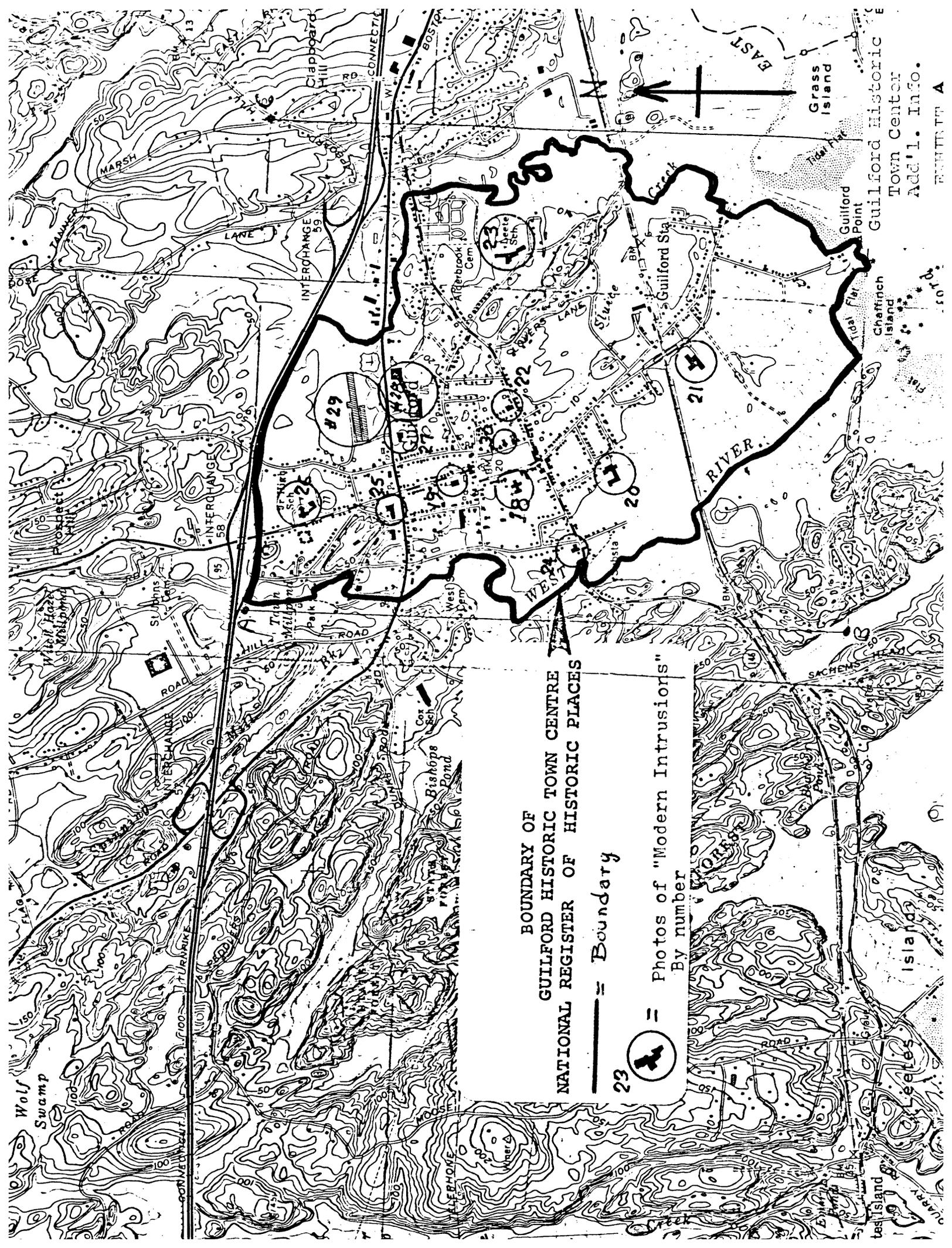
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Boundary Description

The boundary of the Guilford Historic District is as follows:

From the intersection of the W. River with the exit ramps of I-95, the boundary runs east along the highway right of way line crossing North, Church and State Streets to a point on the highway right of way line 200 feet east of State Street; then generally southerly from that point to the rear property line of the second property to the south, then continues southerly along the rear property lines behind the properties fronting on the east side of State Street to the rear property line of the properties fronting on Market Place, thence easterly along the rear property lines of the properties fronting on Market Place, Union Street, and Boston Street to East Creek, thence along the West bank of East Creek to the north bank of a nameless stream immediately south of Alderbook Cemetary to the rear property line of a property fronting on the south side of Boston Street, thence Southwesterly along the rear property lines of the properties fronting on the south side of Boston Street to lovers lane. Thence along the center lines of lovers lane, Stone House Lane and Sawpit Road to the west bank of East Creek, thence southerly along the west bank of East Creek to L.I. Sound, westerly along the shore of L.I. Sound to the E. bank of West River and then northerly along the E. bank of West River to the point of starting.

The area included within the boundaries of the Guilford Historic Town Center amounts to approximately 1752 acres.



**BOUNDARY OF  
GUILFORD HISTORIC TOWN CENTRE  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

—— = Boundary



= Photos of "Modern Intrusions"  
By number

Guilford Historic  
Town Center  
Add'l. Info.  
PLATE A