

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Boston Post Road Historic District

and or common

2. Location

street & number Roughly bounded by Boston Post Road and Milton Harbor not for publication

city, town Rye vicinity of

state New York code 036 county Westchester code 119

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Gulf Course

4. Owner of Property

name Various/see continuation sheet

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Westchester County Department of Land Records

street & number 148 Martine Avenue

city, town White Plains state New York

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title National Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date September, 1982 federal state county local

depository for survey records National Park Service, 1100 L Street, NW

city, town Washington state DC

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input checked="" 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		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The following description is an edited version of the Inventory-Nomination Form in the files of the National Register, National Park Service, 1982:

The Boston Post Road Historic District in Rye, New York is illustrative of the nineteenth-century growth of this lower Westchester County community and includes resources of architectural and cultural significance. Bordered on the west by the Boston Post Road, one of America's earliest highways, the district's other boundaries are Long Island Sound on the east and single family residential neighborhoods. (The houses within these neighborhoods date from the late nineteenth century on the north and the twentieth century structures are on the south.) Within the three hundred acres of the district are three major, stylistically distinctive buildings, twenty-two additional buildings, the Rye City Golf Club, the historic Jay family cemetery, and the extensive natural area of the Marshlands Conservancy. Most of the land within the district's boundaries remains open and the exteriors of the major structures are largely unaltered. The district retains much of its original nineteenth-century character and constitutes one of the few remaining undeveloped areas along the densely populated Boston Post Road.

The following descriptions are keyed numerically to the nomination's general plot plan (appendix A):

1. "Alansten," one of two Greek Revival residences in the district, was constructed in 1838 on land that had been in the Jay family for nearly one hundred years. White-painted clapboard, laid flush in the center section and lapped on either side, the building is three stories high, nine bays wide, and three bays deep. It sits on a fieldstone foundation; exterior walls are brick filled. The main (west) facade is dominated by a pedimented portico with four stylized fluted composite columns, twenty-nine feet, nine inches in height. Panelled pilasters flank the central three bays and are incorporated, on a smaller scale, in the surrounds of the central bay on both levels, and of the recessed entrance door. All pilaster panels are decorated with stylized anthemias. The friezes of the entrance bay entablature are decorated at either end with laurel wreaths in high relief. Other notable details on the main facade include the lights and transom of the entrance door, the shouldered architraves of the rectangular six-over-six fenestration, and the patera decorating the divisions of the central, tripartite second-level window. Projecting lintels on all windows are decorated with anthemias on the central section only, a reduced-scale version of the central and corner ornament of the portico pediment. Small third-floor windows, piercing the frieze, are hidden behind fretwork grilles. The low hipped roof is of copper.

The rear (east) facade features a one-story, full-width porch with ten Doric columns. Fenestration on the second and third levels is identical to that on the main facade; on the first level the windows extend the full height of the porch. The door surround is ornamented with lights and patera. An applied pediment echoes that of the main facade; the decoration in this case is within the gable.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of ^{National} Significance	Check and justify below		
___ prehistoric	___ archeology-prehistoric	___ community planning	___ landscape architecture	___ religion
___ 1400-1499	___ archeology-historic	___ conservation	___ law	___ science
___ 1500-1599	___ agriculture	___ economics	___ literature	___ sculpture
___ 1600-1699	___ ^x architecture	___ education	___ military	___ social/
___ 1700-1799	___ art	___ engineering	___ music	___ humanitarian
___ ^x 1800-1899	___ commerce	___ exploration/settlement	___ philosophy	___ theater
___ 1900-	___ communications	___ industry	___ politics/government	___ transportation
		___ invention		___ other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

This unusual quiet, undeveloped area along the old Boston Post Road contains three architecturally significant houses as well as the Jay family cemetery and a conservation area along the shore of Long Island Sound. The three large estate houses are Greek and Gothic-revival, the latter designed by Alexander Jackson Davis. The district including the cemetery is closely associated with the family of John Jay, first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and second governor of New York state. Much of the landscape setting remains as it was in the eighteenth century when it was first settled, giving the site archeological importance as well. The two superb Greek Revival houses are, Alansten (1838) and Lounsberry (c. 1831). The Gothic Whitby (1854), functions today as the Rye Golf Club.

The three mansions in this district beautifully illustrate the architectural styles of a young nation created to express its new pride and culture. Looking backward to the ancient republics of Greece and Rome, it seemed perfectly logical to Americans who equated their freedom with the democratic ideals of those ancient states, to create a style often called "middle American." Neoclassicism was a statement of faith and hope for a new way of life. It is rare to find two great Greek Revival houses juxtaposed with a house built in the style which replaced the Greek Revival in American taste--the Gothic. This small historic enclave in Rye is a remarkable vestige of that period in American architectural history.

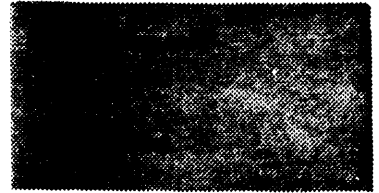
The acreage included in the proposed Boston Post Road Historic District is a portion of that mainland property John Budd purchased from the Indians for "eightie pounds sterling" on November 8, 1661. The tract was called by the Indians, Apawamis, and by the white man, Budd's Neck.

The Budd's Neck property was divided by John Budd in his will, dated October 15, 1669, between his sons, John and Joseph. Joseph, known as "Captain Budd," obtained a patent in 1720 for the land purchased by his father. Joseph's son, also John, inherited the estate on Budd's Neck, which he sold in 1745, principally to Peter Jay.

Peter Jay, born in New York in 1704, was the son of Auguste and the grandson of Pierre, who had left France following the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Educated in England, Peter returned to New York to conduct the successful mercantile business started by his father. He married Mary Van Cortlandt in 1728 and in 1745, at the age of 42, he decided to move his family out of the city. He purchased a 250-acre tract in Rye, and on it built a small two-story farmhouse close to the Boston Post Road. He called the house "The Locusts."

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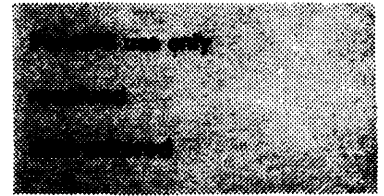
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"Whitby"/City of Rye Golf Club	Mayor (presently John Carey) City of Rye, City Hall Rye, New York 10580
"Lounsberry"/former Parsons estate	Mayor City of Rye, City Hall Rye, New York 10580
"Alansten"/former United Methodist Center	Diane G. Millstein 4 Chatsworth Avenue Larchmont, New York 10538
Marshlands Conservancy	County Executive (presently Alfred DelBello) County of Westchester County Office Building White Plains, New York 10601
Jay Family Cemetery	Jay Family Cemetery Association c/o Dr. John Jay DuBois 30 Cayuga Street Rye, New York 10580

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Changes have occurred to the interior condition of the main house at Alansten in the last two years and subsequent to the original visit to the district in May 1985 by the preparer of this form. Based upon a visit to Alansten by NPS Historian Ben Levy on October 1, 1987, the following describes the changes he observed:

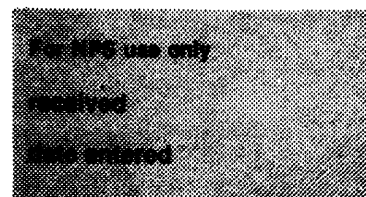
The bannister of the central stairway has been removed. An upstairs wall is broken through leaving a hole about a foot in diameter. Plaster has fallen from some upstairs ceilings. There is some water staining. Some windows are broken.

Windows and doors have been boarded up but not securely enough to prevent vandals and other trespassers from gaining entry and taking a gradual toll of the house. The debris of their encampments is strewn about, including evidence of "campfires" having been ignited within the building.

The house has a generally forlorn and weathered look that would be expected of an unattended abandoned building. Lack of attention, surveillance, and protective maintenance will lead inevitably to further deterioration of the house.

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A one-story, one-bay-wide, three-bay-deep circa 1900 addition to the south facade constitutes the only major exterior change to the house since its construction. Sheathed in clapboard identical to that of the original portion, the addition has corner pilasters; the space between the Doric capitals and the flat roof is treated as an entablature with a denticulated cornice.

Elaborate Greek Revival detailing is carried throughout the majority of first level interior spaces. Door surrounds are topped with carved and bracketed broken pediments or flanked with decorated, panelled pilasters. Fireplaces, all of marble, feature fluted pilasters, caryatid mantel supports, or simple surrounds.* Exceptions to this mode of decoration are the library and the music room, both featuring panelling with Georgian detail. Second level decoration is also elaborate, but is confined largely to the door surrounds and moldings. Ornament on the third level is extremely simple.

2. The Carriage House is a fine example of early twentieth-century (c. 1912) Classical Revival design. One and one-half stories high with a gable roof of slate, the white clapboard structure is composed of a central six-baywide section on the main facade with single wider bays at either end. The end bays, flanked by paneled Doric pilasters, have pedimented porticos supported by pairs of fluted Doric columns and decorated with copper acroteria. Access for carriages was originally provided by doors under the south portico. This entrance was replaced by a large wood-frame window (forty-eight lights) when this portion of the building was converted to office use in 1965....

Under the north end, a glass-enclosed exterior entrance vestibule also represents an alteration. Additional fenestration includes the central section's rectangular fixed six-light sash on each of the end facades and gabled roof dormers with return eaves and pointed arch mullions, four on the south facade and one on the west. An apartment, incorporated in the southern half of the second level, is reached by an entrance at the rear of the south facade. This door has a simple pedimented portico supported by slender unfluted columns. Of particular note is the building's ornate octagonal clock tower centered atop the main section. Significant details include projecting columnettes with full entablatures and the bell-cast copper roof. The [clockworks have been removed, but] . . . design elements . . . are original.

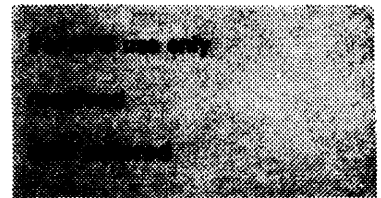
3. South across the service road from the carriage house stands the former stable, now used as a Garage. One and one-half stories high with a gable roof, the white clapboard structure was built for Edgar Palmer, c. 1912. It is of simplified Classical Revival design with an entrance portico placed centrally on each end (north and south) facade.... [The garage has been approved for demolition.]

4. Constructed of uncoursed granite ashlar and shiplap siding, the c. 1920 two and one-half story Tennis House is two bays wide and three deep. The gable roof is supported by a wooden truss system connected with steel bolts.

* Features of the fireplaces including marble panels, pilasters, mantels, mantel supports, and surrounds have been removed recently from all but one fireplace.

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Providing space for a full-sized clay tennis court, the building's interior is open to the roof framing and lit by banks of skylights. A single heavy woodpaneled entrance door is located at the east corner of the south facade.

5. Estate Cottage A appears to date from the early twentieth century, although there was a small residence of similar configuration on the site as early as 1858. One and one-half stories on the main (north) facade and two full stories at the rear because of the sloping lot, the rectangular gable-roofed structure is three bays wide and three deep with wood-frame, double-hung, six-over-six sash and two small brick chimneys, one near each gable end....

6. The Summer House stands northwest of "Alansten," the property's primary structure, on the site of a nineteenth-century building referred to as a chapel. Although constructed in 1957, the summer house was designed to complement the main residence in style and detail.... [Approved for demolition.]

7.* Northwestly across the property from Cottage A, Estate Cottage B, designed and built in 1913 by Chester A. Patterson, is one-and-one-half stories high, three bays wide and one bay deep. The gable-roofed structure has three gable dormers on the main (south) facade. A cottage has served for a number of years as a caretaker's residence....

8. Dating from the Palmer ownership (1911-1935), this long narrow building was constructed c. 1920 as a private Bowling Alley. One story high, one bay wide and four deep, of clapboard with a bracketed gable roof, the structure has been unused for many years....

9, 10, 11, 12. Three of these small Outbuildings (10, 11, 12) are sheathed with novelty siding and the fourth with clapboard. All are one story in height with deteriorated gable roofs, originally of wood shingles now covered with asphalt. The outbuildings were erected c. 1920 to serve as chicken coops or storage sheds....

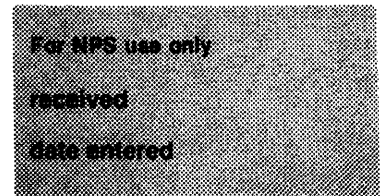
13. Located on the lawn between the main building and the property's southern boundary, this c. 1900 Gazebo, designed in the Oriental mode, stands on a sheet iron base and consists of six unadorned posts and a flattened conical roof....

14. "Lounsberry," the estate north of Alansten, also has a Greek Revival Main Residence. The oldest visible portion of the house was built by Edward Lamb Parsons in 1838 and incorporates within it an earlier structure standing on the land when Parsons purchased it in 1831. Of gray painted wood with white trim, the imposing residence is three stories high, eleven bays wide, and three bays deep on a stone foundation. The main (west) facade is dominated by a two-story portico with fluted Ionic columns with Scamozzi capitals supporting a triangular pediment. Doric pilasters accentuate the corners and set off the

* Buildings 7-13 have recently been demolished. They did not contribute to the national significance of either Alansten or the historic district.

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bays of the building's main block and the north and south wings. A white frame water table above the stone foundation is balanced by the cornice extending around all facades of the house. The copper roof is of a modified hipped configuration; there are three brick chimneys. Fenestration, all rectangular with simple white surrounds and full-length black shutters, includes nine-over-nine double-hung windows on the first level (with the exception of one six-over-six and a four-over-four bay window on the main facade) and six-over-six windows on the second level. The third story is treated as an entablature with small attic windows piercing the frieze. The house has three exterior doors: the main entrance with a battered surround with lights on each side and side (north) and rear (east) entrances both recessed within porches enclosed on three sides....

Only the central five bays, three beneath the portico and one on either side, were part of the 1838 buildings. Additions, most of which were made during the ownership (1858-1882) of James Hewitt Parsons, were: a conservatory and pantry, 1867; a one-story service wing to the north, prior to 1869, later incorporated within the present two-story wing; a second story on the conservatory, 1879; and the library wing to the south, circa 1890. With each addition, care was taken to maintain the symmetry of the main facade and to carry the detailing of the 1838 structure across all facade....

The plan of the 1838 building consisted of, on the first level, two small rooms south of the central hall with a fireplace wall between them and a large room running the building's entire depth on the north. Visible evidence on both the interior and exterior indicates that the hall and two small rooms south of it, constituted the pre-1838 house enlarged by Edward Lamb Parsons. Greek Revival detailing on this level included the door and window surrounds decorated with patera and egg and dart moldings in the dining room, the plaster anthemion ceiling design (also in that room) and the ornament on the stringer of the main stairs. Also of note are the carved walnut balusters and large newel posts, the one at the rear of the hall has a decorative ivory button. Decorative detail on the upper levels is confined to the woodwork and hardware

15. Built as a Gardener's Cottage in 1874 and now occupied by the estate's caretaker, this structure is one and one-half stories high, four bays wide, and one bay deep. The gable roof is covered with asphalt shingles and has a brick chimney. Sheathed in gray clapboard with white trim, the residence has irregular rectangular fenestration....

16. The one-and-one-half story combination Carriage House and Stable, the largest of the estate's outbuildings, dates from 1859, with an 1865 addition. Utilitarian in configuration, the building is distinguished on the exterior by board-and-batten siding, wrought strap and pintle hinges (with battens applied over the hinges in some cases), and unusual shuttered window openings on the main (west) facade framed with ogee arches....

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17. This functional one-and-one-half story frame Outbuilding is five bays wide and one bay deep with a shingled gable roof. The original section dates from 1870; additions to the east and west were made circa 1875 and circa 1900, respectively....

18. One of the earliest outbuildings constructed by James H. Parsons, the Poultry and Wood House, was built in 1858. One story high with a low gable roof, the structure, unused for many years, has three fieldstone walls....

19. The present Greenhouse is the second one on the property; the first, erected during the ownership of Herbert Parsons, had to be replaced when it became overshadowed by the growth of large trees. Built by Lord and Burnham, a prominent Westchester firm, the building is constructed of glazing on wooden bars with a pressed asbestos foundation. The furnace was replaced and the heating system repaired in 1946....

20. "Whitby," the Gothic Revival structure now used as the Rye Golf Club clubhouse, was designed by Alexander Jackson Davis for Willaim Chapman and completed in 1854. Of gray stone quarried at Greenwich, Connecticut and possessing a slate roof, the main block of the building is two stories high and, as originally built, nine bays wide and six bays deep. The prominent main (west) facade gable contains three lancet windows and a rose window above the entrance porte-cochere; a five-story octagonal tower is appended to the entrance gable. Other towers, smaller in scale and either square or octagonal, are featured at additional points in the structure's irregular plan. The tops of all towers are crenelated, with the main tower featuring unusual stepped battlements. Fenestration, in addition to that mentioned, consists of window and door openings that are either squareheaded or Tudor-arched with label moldings. Bay and oriel windows, characteristic of Davis designs of the period, appear on the west, north, and east facades. Finials, crockets, and the original distinctive chimney pots have been removed. Gothic Revival details remaining on the building's interior are: door surrounds of elongated columns with foliate carvings in the spandrels; visible rafters with carved and sculpted bosses and corbels, many portraying famous historical personages; and marble fireplaces. Ornate original hardware is still in place throughout the building....

Major alterations include interior changes in the main stair area, where the Gothic Revival woodwork was replaced with that of the Eastlake style (late nineteenth century); the conversion of the former south wing servants' quarters to locker rooms for golf club use (circa 1925); the enclosure of a north facade veranda (date unknown); the expansion of the large room to the east as a dining area, including an outdoor terrace (1965); and the expansion of the kitchen facilities to the south....

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21. Two stories high, three bays wide, and four bays deep, the Caretaker's House at Whitby is of brown painted clapboard with white trim. The circa 1880 building has a veranda with Doric columns extending across the main (south) facade and partially across the west facade. The central portion of the house has a metal, cross-gabled roof and a brick chimney; the veranda roof is covered with asphalt shingles....

22. An amalgam of sections added over the years as the building's function changed, this structure now serves as a pool house and golf cart garage. Gothic Revival details within the east gable of the southeast section and the appearance of a building, marked "stable," at this location on early maps indicate that the present structure may incorporate an outbuilding designed by Davis or his office for Chapman....

23. Directly across the path from the golf cart garage is a late 1960's structure, one and one-half stories high and two bays wide, serving as the Starter's House for the golf course....

24. A large concrete-block structure, also dating from the late 1960's, is the club's Maintenance Building....

(Neither 22, 23, or 24 contribute to the Historic District.)

25. The Marshlands Conservancy borders the Long Island Sound at the foot of the former United Methodist Center and Parsons Estate properties. It consists of one hundred thirty-seven acres of land, one hundred twenty of which were part of the original four hundred purchased by the Jay family in the eighteenth century and deeded in 1967 to the county of Westchester by Mr. and Mrs. Walter Devereux. The remaining seventeen acres were given to the county by Mrs. John E. Parsons in 1976.

The Conservancy contains open grasslands, deep woodlands with a wide variety of deciduous and evergreen trees, tidal wetlands, and a varied shoreline rich in marine life. Aside from interpretive trails, the small one-room block building that provides space for exhibits and for study groups meeting with the staff naturalist, the building's approach road and small parking lot, and the Jay cemetery, no construction interrupts the 137-acre expanse of natural habitat.

26. The Jay Family Cemetery is located north and east of Alansten. Approximately three acres in size, the present cemetery includes the first plot formally established in 1815 by John Jay (82/100ths of an acre) plus the land added in 1944 to provide additional space for expansion and to assure privacy. The original lot (approximately 65 feet by 125 feet) is enclosed on three sides by a low stone dry wall and surrounded by many tall trees; the "new lot" is of the same dimensions and is walled on all four sides. The perimeter of the entire cemetery has been planted with evergreens and is protected by a

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high wire fence. The uniform appearance of the cemetery has been achieved by the cemetery corporation regulations governing scale, design, and materials of stones and monuments. The scale is interrupted, fittingly, only by the height of the obelisk monument bearing the name of John Jay, the family's most prominent member. The monument stands a few feet to the south of the sarcophagus over the actual grave site of Jay, who died in 1829.

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Mary and Peter brought seven children to Rye; the eldest was seventeen, and John, the youngest, was only a few months old. John spent his boyhood on the Rye estate. During this time additions were made to the farmhouse, and more land, eventually totaling four hundred acres, was purchased by Peter, including the off-shore Hen Island. John received his early education at home, was sent at age eight to a New Rochelle grammar school, and at eleven returned to Rye to be tutored in Greek and Latin. At age fifteen he was admitted to King's College in New York City, now Columbia University. Upon graduation, he served as a law clerk and was admitted to the bar on October 31, 1768. Jay became a prominent patriot, minister to France and Spain, a negotiator of the peace treaty with Great Britain, the first Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, and the second governor of the state of New York.

John's parents, Peter and Mary, were forced to leave the family home at Rye in 1776 because of the British occupation nearby. They died before they could return. In 1782 the house and property were left to John's older brother, Peter. John inherited the Rye estate upon his brother's death in 1815, but he, his wife, Sarah Livingston, and their family were by then settled on land in Katonah, New York.

John and Sarah's oldest son, Peter Augustus, had been closely involved with the Rye property; he managed the property for his uncle and then for his widowed aunt. In April, 1789, he wrote to his father that he "had spent a day or two at Rye and planted a row of popular trees for Uncle Peter." A respected New York lawyer, Peter Augustus inherited the Rye property upon his father's death in 1829.

Alansten

Peter, his wife, Mary Rutherford Clarkson, and their seven children, occupied the original house for several years. They had frequent visitors, including the noted author James Fenimore Cooper. The estate was altered visibly during the early 1830s with the planting of new trees, the removal of fences, and the changing of former field land into rolling lawns. The major change occurred when the estate's original residence was demolished and replaced with another. On November 17, 1836, Jay signed a contract with Edwin Bishop for a new house to cost \$14,500 and to be completed by April 1, 1838. The construction was finished ahead of time; the house was furnished, and the family moved in early 1838.

Although there is no architect of record for the Peter Jay house, known as "Alansten," many of the details are readily traceable to architectural pattern books available at the time of construction. These sources seem to have been primarily: Minard Lafever's The Modern Builder's Guide, 1833; Lafever's The Beauties of Modern Architecture, 1835; and Chester Hills' The Builder's Guide of either 1834 or 1836. The choice of Corinthian columns for the main facade is an interesting one, more commonly seen on public buildings rather than residences; the proportions are also unusual, the depth of the entablature being one-fifth the height of the columns.

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Only one major exterior change, the small addition to the south, c. 1890, has been made since 1838. Most of the significant interior spaces, including those of the library and music room said to contain imported panelling, remain unaltered. Also unaltered is the vista from the rear facade of the impressive residence to the Long Island Sound....

Mary Rutherford Clarkson Jay died the year the new house was completed; Peter died in 1843. The property was inherited by their son, Dr. John Clarkson Jay, who died in 1891. His descendants rented the house to various tenants until 1904. On November 1, 1906, the estate was purchased by Warner M. Van Norden from James J. Fine and his wife, and in 1911, the house and land became the property of Edgar Palmer, president of the New Jersey Zinc Company. Palmer acquired additional land in 1913 and in 1922 and in 1935, granted the whole to his daughter, Zilph, who as Mrs. Walter Devereux maintained ownership for 32 years....

It has been noted that Palmer commissioned the distinguished architect, Cass Gilbert to design additions to Alansten. Alterations actually made during the Van Norden/Palmer period of ownership consist of a basement billiard room added by the Van Nordens, and a central heating system installed by Palmer. An interesting, though undocumented, tradition associated with the Van Nordens states that Mr. Van Norden was driven daily to the Rye station in a carriage drawn by zebras. These exotic animals were sheltered in a stable on the property afterwards known as the zebra house....

In 1967 Mrs. Devereux divided the remaining property by giving the house, its out-buildings, and 23 acres to the United Methodist Church; selling 14 acres to a developer for the construction of 22 residences; and deeding 120 acres, including Hen Island, to the County of Westchester for conservation purpose....

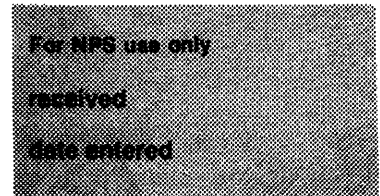
The history of the small family cemetery has been recorded in a book privately printed at Rye called The Jay Cemetery, October 1947, which details the evolution of this burial ground. The history of the parcel dates to the early years of the nineteenth century. Prior to that time, members of the family were buried in a family vault believed to have been at, or close to, the church of St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery. In 1805, however, the young son of Goldsborough Banyer, who had married John Jay's daughter Maria, died and was buried in a lot in the "East Meadow" of the farm at Rye. A year later, the older Banyer died and was buried beside his son.

In 1807, the remains of those who had been buried in the New York City vault, including Sarah Livingston, John's wife, who had died in 1802, were interred in Rye under one stone. In 1808 and 1810, there were additional burials; in 1815, Peter and Sir James, brothers of John, were buried at Rye.

Also in 1815, John inherited the farm, and officially set aside as a family cemetery the lot where the burials had occurred 82/100's of an acre in size. John himself was buried there in 1829.

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In the deed creating the cemetery trust, of which his son, Peter Augustus Jay, and his nephew, Peter Jay Munro, were designated as trustees, it was provided that "all descendants of Peter Jay (John's father) shall have right of burial in the cemetery lot; also the husbands, wives, and widows of such descendants." This restriction has since been adhered to with one exception; in 1843, Judith Livingston Watkins, sister of Mrs. John Jay, was buried in the cemetery. And in 1810, before the trust was created, three children named Titford, who were drowned in the sound at the foot of the farm, were buried there. The cemetery area was enlarged to 2.85 acres in 1946 and the maintenance endowment correspondingly increased. In use by the Jay family for 175 years, the cemetery is one of the few utilized by Americans active in Revolutionary times that is still functioning.

Lounsberry

"Lounsberry" the estate north of the Jay property, takes its name from that of an early settler in the area. Richard Lounsberry was one of the proprietors of Peningo Neck, a section of land adjacent to Apawamis. He also owned land on Budd's Neck, willed to his wife and eldest son in 1690.

Ownership of this land can be accurately documented. In 1831, Edward Lamb Parsons bought thirty-seven acres called Lounsberry Farms for \$5,500 and on April 1, 1836, Parsons bought sixteen and a half more acres, on the "Turn Pike Road," for \$2,175.

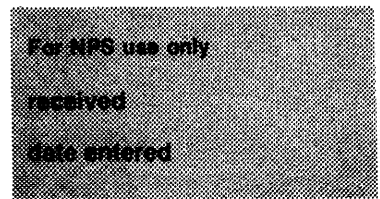
Edward Lamb Parsons was born in England and came to New York in his late teens to join a maternal uncle, James Hewitt, in business. His son, John E., born on October 24, 1829, said of Edward: "My father had the Englishman's love of the country. Not long after his marriage he purchased an estate at Rye, then and still called Lounsberry, which he made his summer home. He enlarged the house then standing on the place, lived there a large part of the year, and there I was brought up."

Judging from the evidence contained without and within the present structure, the "house then standing on the place" consisted of a simple two-story-high, three-bay-wide, and four-bay-deep shingled residence, more closely resembling an urban town house than a rural farm residence, even to the kitchen in the basement. Initially, two bays were added to the north and the facade was remodelled behind a new portico. Some interior remodelling also took place so that the old might more closely resemble the Greek Revival detailing of the new, particularly in the first floor stair hall. Wood fireplace surrounds and mantels were replaced with imported black Italian marble. Federal moldings were retained in the earlier rooms, however, and are visible today.

In 1839, Edward Lamb Parsons, returning from a business trip to England died in the wreck of the packet ship "Pennsylvania." His widow and five children kept Lounsberry until 1850, when the house and property were sold to William R. Talbot. The farm was out of the Parsons family for only eight years; in 1858, Talbot sold it to James Hewitt Parsons, brother of Edward Lamb, for \$17,500.

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James Hewitt Parsons, a prosperous and prominent member of the local community, kept a personal account book from the time he purchased Lounsberry until 1881, the year before his death. During these twenty-three years, he changed the house and property in many ways, all of which were noted in his account book. After his death, James' widow, Margaret, sold the property to her nephew, John E. Parsons (son of Edward Lamb) for \$40,000.

John E. had spent a good part of his early life in Rye, at Lounsberry and at the home of his maternal grandfather, Ebenezer Clarke. He entered New York University in October, 1844. He graduated high in his class, was apprenticed to a noted lawyer, and was admitted to the bar in 1852. In 1854, he formed, with Lorenzo B. Shepard, the firm of Shepard and Parsons in New York City; through that and successive associations, he became one of New York's most prominent lawyers and a founding member of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York. His long and illustrious career brought him wealth which he invested in the estate at Rye and in a summer house he owned at Lenox, Massachusetts.

The most significant change occurring during this period of ownership involved the library. The wing had been added some years before, but when John E. decided to transfer his extensive collection of law books from New York City to the house at Rye, he also decided the library was not entirely to his liking. In 1910-1912, he engaged the firm of Delano and Aldrich to remodel the space to resemble more closely the library of the Osgood Field residence in Lenox, a house Parsons much admired. The formerly all-white interior was replaced with panelling in rare butternut wood, detailed in a restrained classical style.

After the death of John E. Parsons, the property in Rye passed first to his son, and then to his grandson, also John E. The main house has been well maintained and has basically remained intact since the library was remodelled. The only major change has been the relocation of the kitchen from the basement to the first floor service wing. The gardens and lawns adjacent to the house have also been well cared for. Due to a gradual reduction in farm-related activities, some of the outbuildings have fallen into disrepair.

Upon the death of her husband in 1976, Mrs. Parsons donated 17 acres of land at the foot of the estate to the county to be added to the Marshlands Conservancy; recently, in May, 1980, she deeded the remaining 13.5 acres, the residence and outbuildings, to the city of Rye....

Whitby

The third estate within the district is "Whitby" (now the Rye Golf Club), located north of the Parsons property at 330 Boston Post Road. Also part of the original Apawamis/Budd's Neck purchase, the land passed through several hands and was sold in the mid-nineteenth century to William P. Chapman. Although two superb examples

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of Greek Revival architecture, Lounsberry and Alansten, were close at hand, Chapman felt the Gothic mode to be more appropriate to the setting, and chose Alexander Jackson Davis, the leading Gothic Revival architect of the day, to design a villa for him....

Davis (1803-1892) was born and educated in New York. He entered the "Antique School" which later merged with the Academy of Design, and he served as apprentice-designer under Josiah R. Brady, at that time the only practicing architect in the city. In 1827, during a visit to Boston, he was allowed to study at the old Athenaeum. Returning to New York, he entered the office of Ithiel Town.... In 1828, Davis was listed in the City Directory as "Architectural Composer." In 1829, Town took him into partnership. Together they were responsible for several churches, state capitols, and distinguished residences. Following Town's death in 1844, Davis remained in practice for nearly 30 years, and the range of his work widened to include college and institutional buildings and some commercial projects
....

More than any other architect, Davis developed the Gothic style for country houses in America. His graceful villa and charming cottages were far from mere copies of English sources; their scale was small and their composition highly original. While he was with Town, the firm had ventured into Gothic; the most significant Town and Davis structure in this mode was a New York University building, for which Davis designed the handsome fan-vaulted chapel, then the most elaborate Gothic-ceilinged space in this country, and Robert Gilmor's "Glenellen" (1832) near Baltimore. Alone, Davis designed several Gothic Revival villas and cottages, the first and most important of which was "Knoll," later known as "Lyndhurst," in Tarrytown, New York (1838)....

The design of the Chapman estate, to be called "Whitby," was begun in December, 1852; the building was essentially finished in 1854. The building superintendent on the job was George Nichols; other workmen were E. Pitcher, mason; Leonard Miller, carpenter; the finials were executed by "Smith." These notes are gleaned from his Journal in the A.J. Davis collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where there are a number of original drawings of Whitby. Columbia University's Avery Library also has a manuscript "Day Book" in which Davis mentioned Whitby.

Chapman and Davis, who shared a common interest in the theatre, became close friends. When Chapman decided to sell the Rye estate in the 1870s, the prospectus now at Avery, was written with Davis' help. The residence was described as having been built

... in the Castellated style of Architecture; of large dimension, on an eminence commanding magnificent views of Long Island Sound and surrounding country; built in the most substantial manner, and in perfect order.

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The Mansion is constructed of stone, from the Greenwich Quarries, having a Porte Cochere, at the principal approach. The Main or Flag Tower 70 feet high, with solid black walnut staircase to the top, from which the view is unsurpassed.²

The property was sold to Joseph Park, of the firm of Park and Tilford, whose reputation as grocers and importers is second to that of no similar business house in the world. The forty acres sold him by Chapman represented only a small portion of Park's property in the area; Scharf in his History of Westchester County states that his total holdings extended over "fourteen hundred acres, partly in the town of Rye and partly in Harrison." Park continued the association with Davis; in 1881-1882, he commissioned Whitby's architect to make studies of some changes, including "revision of Art room" and "turret for E. front," but these projects were not carried out.³

The property remained in the Park family until the early twentieth century. In 1920, it became the private Rye Country Club, with an eighteen-hole golf course completed in 1924. A series of reorganizations began in 1935, ending in 1965 when the city of Rye became the owner, expanded the facilities, added a swimming pool, and renamed the former Chapman estate the "Rye Golf Club." Membership is open to residents of the community.

Concerning the significance of the residence, now a clubhouse, Jane B. Davies, the authority on A. J. Davis, states:

Although the overall design of Whitby bears some relationship to other Davis designs... the placement of its tower, within the body of the house, is unique. One of the splendid features of Whitby is the two-story bay window, overlooking the Sound, perhaps the finest from Davis' hand. The octagonal entrance hall, repeated above at the second-floor level and linked by a large light well, is an important example of Davis' use of space, light, and radial planning; the use here of masks as corbels is the only surviving example of this favorite feature in Davis' large villas, with the exception of Lyndhurst, where the masks are different and are used differently.⁴

In spite of the fact that the clubhouse function of the structure has necessitated changes, the essentials of Davis' original architectural design remain, and the use of the grounds as a golf course has been sympathetic to the house's nineteenth-century setting, maintaining the sweeping lawns and many of the vistas existing when the Gothic Revival residence was first constructed.

The Marshlands Conservancy owned by the county of Westchester, is the fifth major element of the historic district. It is comprised of land from the former Jay and Parsons estates and abuts the Rye Golf Club shoreline boundary. Within its 137 acres are contained woodlands with a variety of deciduous trees, among which nests

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one of New York state's two colonies of yellow-crowned night herons outside of Long Island. Habitat is provided for many other bird species by the woods and by the large field, visible from the rear veranda of "Alansten," once used by the Jay family for growing wheat. Included in the ecology of the Conservancy is a large salt marsh, and state-protected tidal wetlands. A wide variety of sea life inhabits the sandy, muddy, and rocky areas of the sound shore. Vistas in existence since the eighteenth century and natural areas undisturbed from the time of Indian occupancy are part of this valuable ecological preserve.

The Boston Post Road Historic District contains magnificent examples of stylistically distinctive architecture, strong associations with Rye's early settlement and with the nationally prominent Jay family, and important natural areas. Together they provide evidence of three hundred years of growth and change along the Boston Post Road.

This ensemble of two great Greek-Revival houses, one outstanding Gothic house by the hand of A. J. Davis and the Jay Cemetery and nature preserve represent a period of stylistic change in American architecture that has changed very little in 200 years.

Footnotes

¹Memorial of John E. Parsons. Prepared by Joseph H. Choate. March 14, 1916. Year book of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, 1916.

²Undated Prospectus. Davis Collection, Avery Library, Columbia University.

³Davies, Jane B. "Alexander J. Davis, Architect of Lyndhurst." Historic Preservation, published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Vol. 17, No. 2, March-April, 1965, pp. 53-59.

⁴Ibid.

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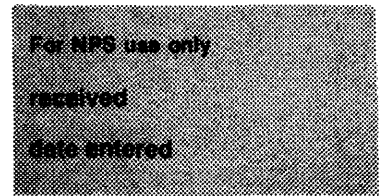
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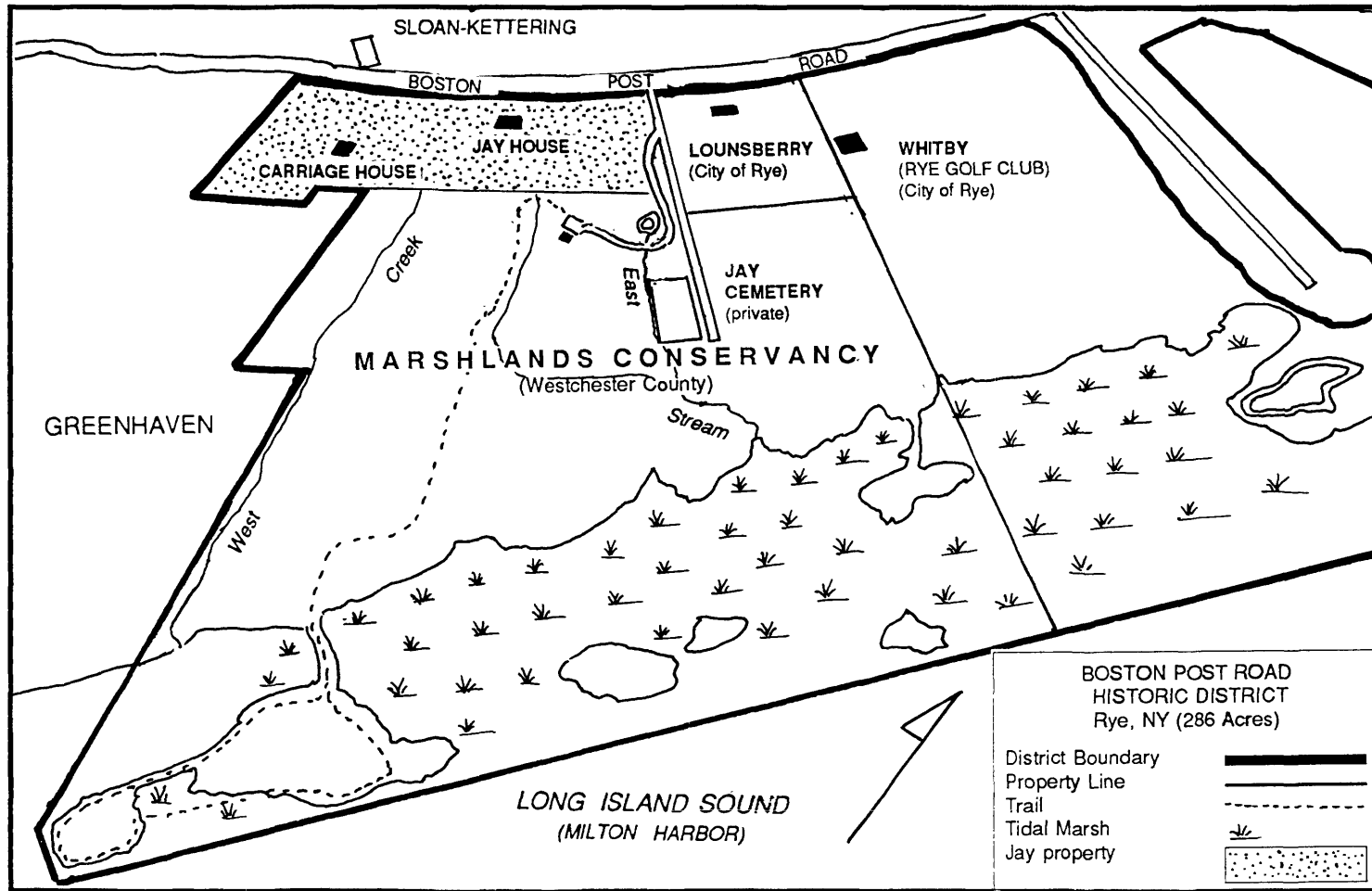
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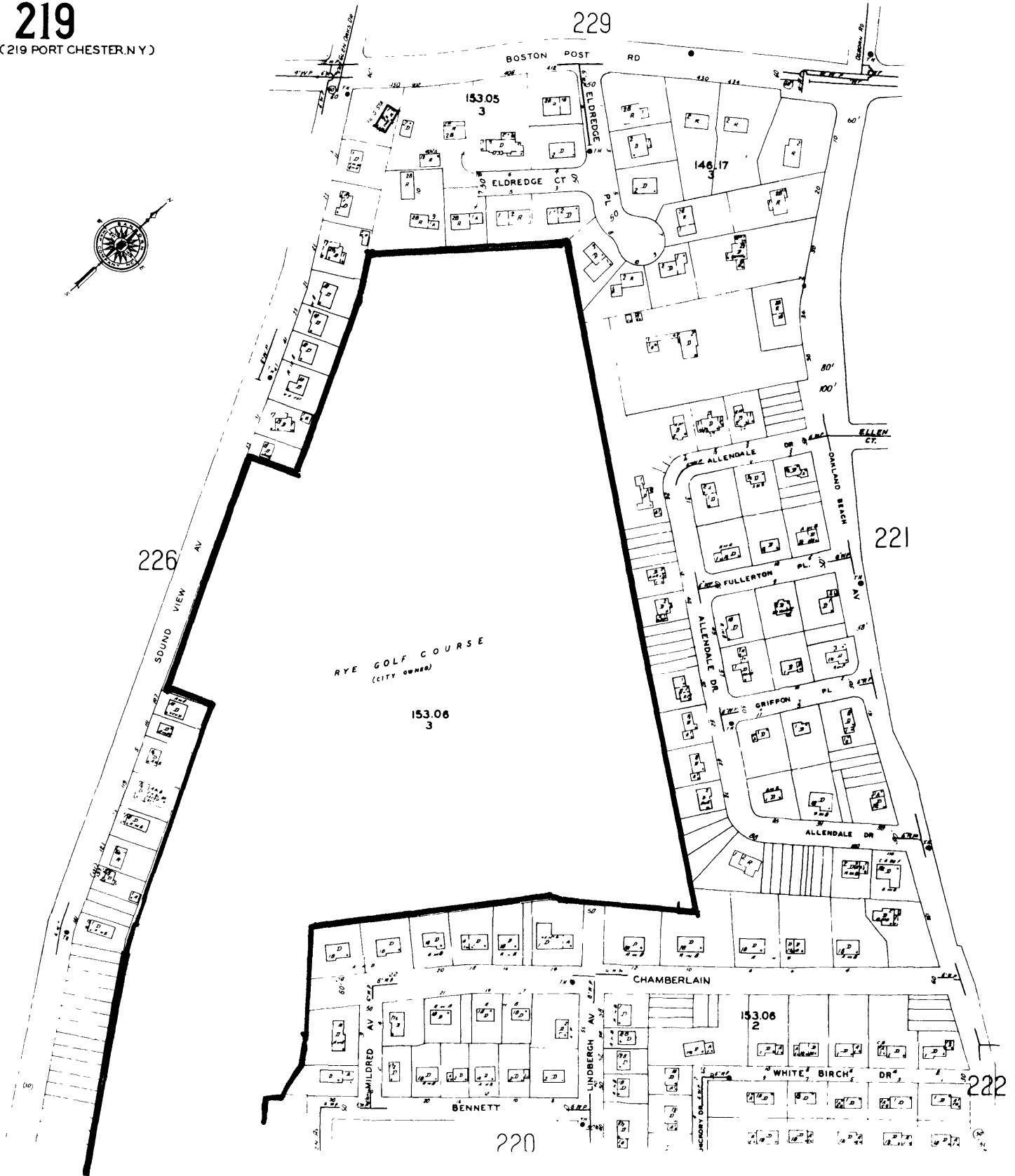
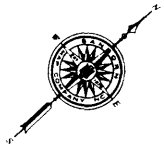
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H	609160	4533490
I	609210	4533700
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K	608990	4534080
L	608840	4534020
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R	609730	4534620
S	609800	4534730
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U	609440	4535310

The boundary of the Boston Post Road Historic District encompasses only the historic structures and lands historically associated with those structures. The boundary is that of the combined lots of the five owners cited on the continuation sheet, part 4, page 1, of this inventory-nomination form. The boundary is shown as the heavy line encompassing those properties on accompanying copies of the following sanborn maps: Rye, NY, 219 (219 Port Chester, NY); Rye, NY, 225 (225 Port Chester, NY); and Rye, NY, 226 (226 Port Chester, NY).

THE BOSTON POST ROAD HISTORIC DISTRICT



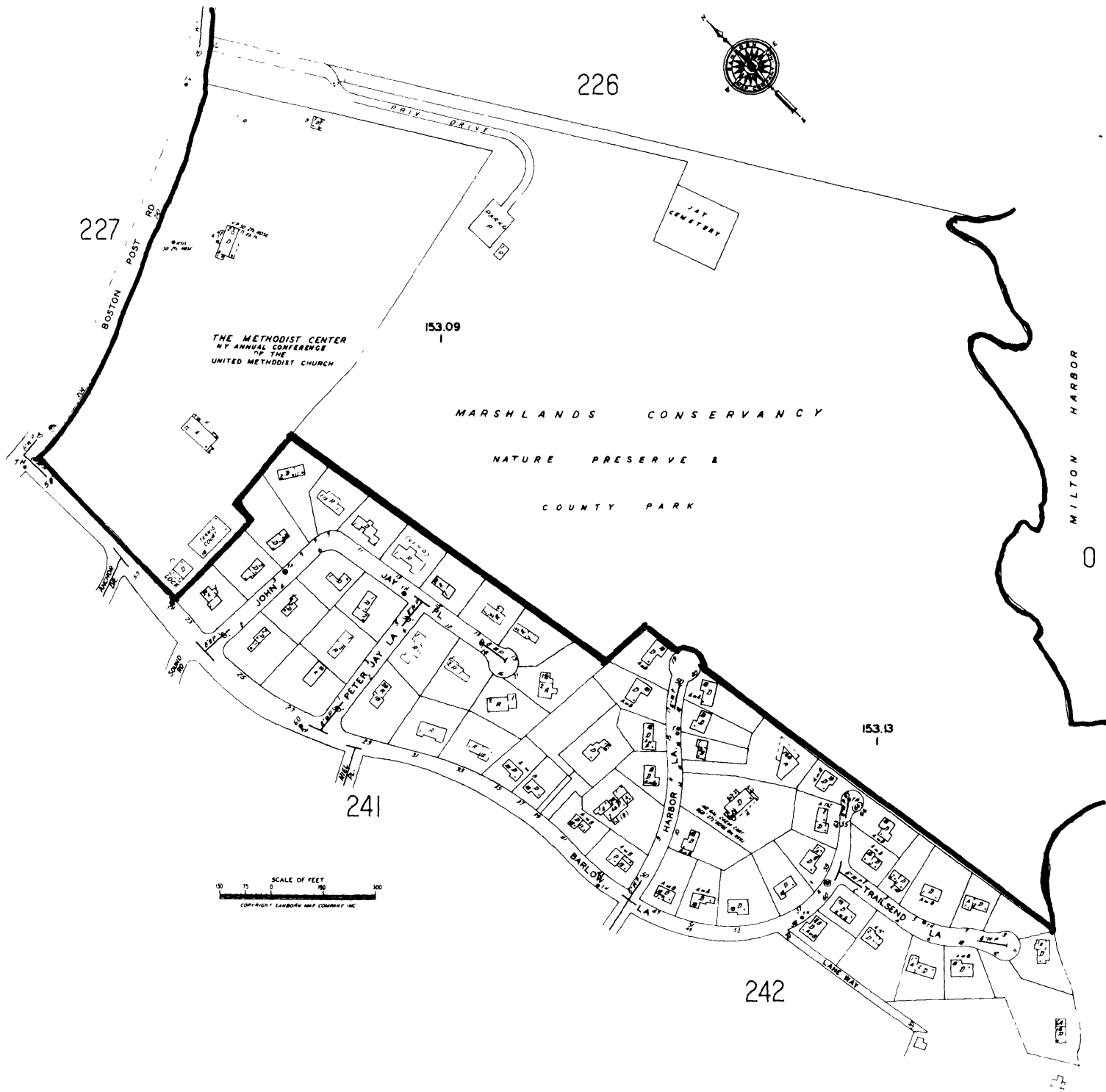
RYE, N. Y.
219
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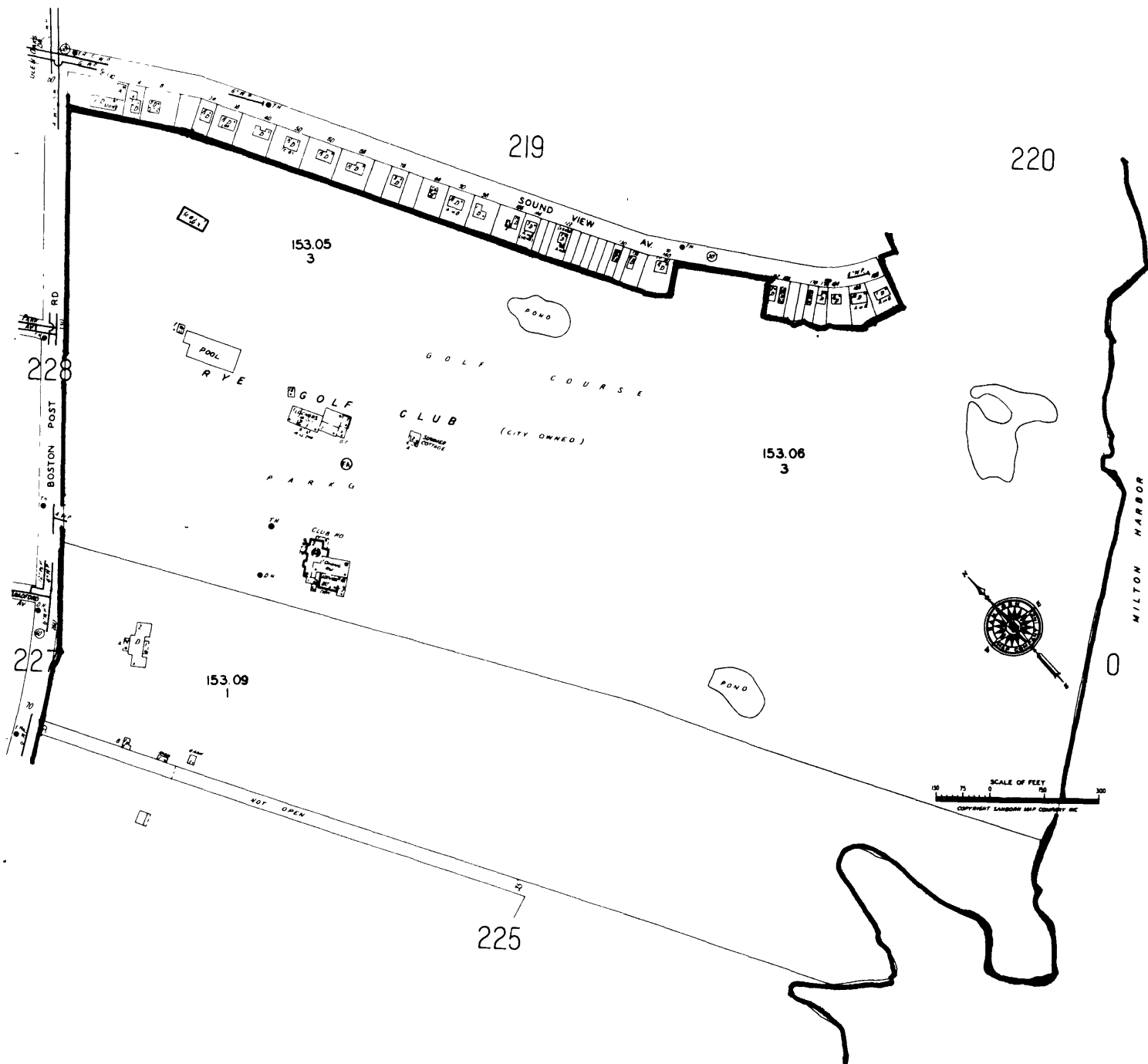


RYE, N.Y.

225

(226 PORT CHESTER, N.Y.)





Boston Post Road Historic District, Rye, Westchester Co., N.Y.

Figure 1 - The environmental zones, prehistoric archaeological sites and probable sites, and historic features identified by Pfeiffer. Source: Adapted from Pfeiffer (1982).

