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National Park Service

JAN 09 1990

National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

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 of Middletown, R.I., 1636-present

B. Associated Historic Contexts

Historic and Architectural Development of Middletown, R.I., 1636-present

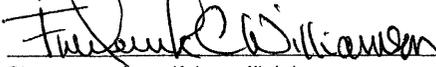
C. Geographical Data

Incorporated boundaries of the Town of Middletown, Newport County, R.I.

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

3 Jan 1990
Date

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

2/23/90
Date

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Discuss each historic context listed in Section B.

HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES OF MIDDLETOWN, RI, 1636-PRESENT

PHYSICAL AND CULTURAL SETTING

Location and Area

Middletown, in Newport County, is located in lower Narragansett Bay about twenty-five miles southeast of Providence and about one mile from downtown Newport. Its name derives from its location: Middletown occupies the middle section of Aquidneck Island. The town's 14.7 square-mile area lies between Portsmouth to the north and Newport to the southwest. Rhode Island Sound, Narragansett Bay, and the Sakonnet River bound the community on the south, west, and east, respectively.

Middletown's major transportation arteries--West Main Road (Route 114) and East Main Road (Route 138)--which meet at Two Mile Corner, make connections with bridges to the south and north. A rail line runs along the shore of Narragansett Bay.

Aquidneck Island is one of the earliest colonial settlement sites in Rhode Island. Portsmouth was founded in 1638 and Newport in 1639. Middletown was part of Newport until it was set off in 1743.

Geology and Landforms

The Narragansett Basin, covering most of eastern Rhode Island and composed of sedimentary rocks (conglomerate, shale, and some coal), was formed some 300 million years ago. Since then weathering and erosion, including the leveling effect of continental glaciation, have resulted in a gently rolling surface in Middletown's topology. The town, for the most part, has a rich loam soil higher in natural fertility than any other soil in the state. Because most of Middletown was farmed from the late seventeenth through the mid-twentieth centuries, there are few wooded areas today. Several small hills, with summit elevations ranging from about 100 feet to about 250 feet above sea level, punctuate Middletown's landscape; the highest elevation, slightly over 250 feet, is at Slate Hill, along East Main Road at the Portsmouth. The undulating topography and water frontage provide a diversified and beautiful natural landscape which has always been one of Middletown's attractions.

At the south end of Middletown a more rugged and dramatic landscape is presented by an area of outcropping conglomerate rocks with bold rock faces and a series of parallel ridges, including Paradise Rocks, Hanging Rock, and Purgatory. Hanging Rock, a vast conglomerate ledge frequented by Bishop Berkeley (the noted eighteenth-century divine), and nearby Purgatory, with its deep, wave-worn chasm and bed of pebbles, are among the most interesting and important geological features of Rhode Island. Along the south coast, the Atlantic shoreline offers

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dramatic contrasts ranging from a rugged and rocky coast culminating at Easton Point and Sachuest Point to flat expanses of sandy beach at Easton's Beach, Second (Sachuest) Beach, and Third Beach. Part of Sachuest and the nearby Paradise Hills are still in a natural state and are set aside as wildlife sanctuaries. Middletown's waterways are small, little more than seasonal brooks, but there are three large ponds at the south end of town--Nelson Pond and Gardiner Pond at the south end of the Paradise Hills and Green End Pond along the Newport line.

SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES European Settlement

Indians inhabited the Narragansett Bay region for thousands of years before its discovery by European settlers, and the Native American way of life, as determined from some archaeological research and casual gathering of artifacts, is traditionally assumed to have been an exploitative economy based on the resources of the land and sea.

Before the coming of Europeans, there was a lengthy war between the Narragansetts and the Wampanoags. Emerging victorious and eventually subduing several other tribes were the Narragansetts, the largest of the Algonquin family which inhabited New England and who had dominion over the islands of Narragansett Bay when the first white men arrived.

The first European to make contact with Indians in the Narragansett Bay region was Giovanni da Verrazano, in 1524. He remained for only a few days, but by 1614 Dutch traders were conducting an active business with the Indians in the Bay. When Roger Williams arrived in 1636, Canonicus and Miantonomi were the sachems of the Narragansetts.

In 1638, through the intercession of Roger Williams, Aquidneck Island was deeded by Canonicus and Miantonomi to John Clarke, William Coddington, Nicholas Easton, and several others who had been exiled from Massachusetts colony because of their sympathy with the Antinomian movement and its leader, Anne Marbury Hutchinson. They established a settlement called Pocasset (later Portsmouth) at the northern end of the island. In 1639 a group led by Coddington, Clarke, and Easton

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left Portsmouth and started a new settlement at the southern end of Aquidneck, and the island was divided in half along the present boundary between Middletown and Portsmouth. What later became Middletown was included within the jurisdiction of Newport and since that time the history of Middletown has been closely associated with that of Newport.

Before the American Revolution, Newport developed into one of America's major urban centers and seaports. The outlying areas benefited by Newport's mercantile growth, and farmers found a ready market for their agricultural products there. The area which is now Middletown underwent a rural transformation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, starting as early as 1640 when Nicholas Easton began farming near Sachuest Beach. Although little remains of the Easton Farm, other farmhouses have survived. There are several good examples of two-and-a-half-story, large, center-chimney dwellings--the Chase House, 88 Oliphant Lane; the Allen-King-Norman House, on Third Beach Road; the Peckham House, at 6 Baldwin Road; and the Coggeshall House at 121 Greene Lane. The latter still retains its original agricultural environment and is part of a broader historical district which includes several other farmhouses which have been farmed by the Coggeshall family for many decades.

The rural character of what is now Middletown appealed to Bishop George Berkeley, the Anglo-Irish philosopher. While awaiting promised funding for a college he hoped to found in Bermuda, Berkeley bought a ninety-six-acre tract "out in the woods." He built a farmhouse and lived there from 1720 to 1731, devoting his days to agriculture and writing. "Whitehall," his residence, was named in memory of the old palace of the English kings; the house still stands, and its surrounding area is still in fields.

The rural Middletown countryside also appealed to merchants and other prominent Newport residents, who set up summer estates here, complete with fine gardens and landscaped grounds. The most pretentious extant eighteenth-century dwelling in Middletown is William Redwood's Country House (c. 1745), an estate which exemplifies the high-style country living enjoyed by Newport's early wealthy merchants. Later, Quaker preacher David Buffum lived in the house.

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By mid-century, a combination of circumstances--including the development of the land, a growing population, and resentment over unjust taxation--led to a petition to the General Assembly for political independence by Newport freeholders living in "the woods." As a result, Middletown was set off as a separate town in 1743.

A number of supporting institutions and services were also created during the eighteenth century. A school was built as early as 1701 or 1702, and gradually others were added throughout the town. The oldest extant schoolhouse in Middletown is the 1794 Peabody School on Third Beach Road, now used as a private residence.

A ferry service was started, probably in the eighteenth century, at a landing at what is now the east end of Green Avenue. Known as Taggart's Ferry, it carried produce from Little Compton destined for Newport and ran until about 1870. A windmill was located along Wyatt Road sometime before the Revolutionary War and later a small water-powered gristmill was put into operation along Bailey's Brook near Two Mile Corner, but there is no trace of either structure today.

The Revolutionary War

In December, 1776, British troops, under the command of Sir Henry Clinton, landed on Aquidneck Island. Some came ashore at Long Wharf in Newport, but the main body, about 9000 British and Hessian soldiers, landed on the shores of the Sakonnet River in Middletown and the next day marched to Newport. Aquidneck Island, held until October, 1779, was much affected by the British occupation. Trees were cut down, many residences and other property destroyed, and the economy was disrupted. About one quarter of Middletown's residents were driven away from their homes. Soon after landing, the British established a strong, continuous line of defense around the perimeter of Newport. The eastern terminus was at Bliss Hill, above Easton's Pond; from there a series of redoubts, batteries, counter batteries, and forts was established, extending northwest to Narragansett Bay, most of them in Middletown. According to contemporary maps, Fort Fanning, a relatively large fortification, was established near the West Main Road at Two Mile Corner. Of more than a dozen British fortifications in Middletown, one survives today, and

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only traces of the remains of the Green End, or Card's Redoubt, can still be seen.

The British occupation of Newport was followed by the more pleasant occupation by the French, who remodeled and restored some local fortifications. Redoubt St. Onge, on Vernon Avenue, was constructed by Colonial and French troops in 1780; its earthworks are now preserved in a small parklike setting maintained by the Sons of the Revolution. Although identified as Green End Fort, recent research shows that the Green End Fort, or more correctly, the Green End, or Card's Redoubt, is north of this site.

THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

In the early nineteenth century, most of Rhode Island was undergoing industrialization, with numerous textile mills springing up on the state's many waterways. But Middletown had no stream large enough to power a textile mill; with its gently rolling terrain and rich soil, Middletown's land was advanced to a high state of cultivation, and most farmers found a good market for their products in Newport. Farms continued to develop throughout the nineteenth century, as exemplified in the Ogden Farm on Mitchell Lane, comprising most of the Mitchell Lane Rural Historic District and the David Albro Farm at 1219 East Main Road. The Albro Farm is an extraordinarily complete and handsome complex which includes numerous shingle-clad outbuildings and a pristine and well preserved farmhouse.

In the mid-nineteenth century, the Aquidneck Agricultural Society had a fairgrounds on West Main Road (now the housing development known as Birchwood Manor); later in the century the Society established a fairgrounds on Wyatt Road. There are no longer any agricultural fairs in Middletown, but the Aquidneck Grange on East Main Road is a reminder of a formerly more active agricultural period and society.

New houses were built, keeping pace with a slowly increasing population. Examples dating from the second quarter of the nineteenth century include the Jethro Peckham House, 67 Green End Avenue, and the James Smith House at 708 Mitchell Lane--both typical one-and-a-half-story Greek Revival dwellings. Newport

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lawyer William Vernon's house (1833) on Miantonomi Avenue at One Mile Corner, was designed by Providence architect Russell Warren. It is a very elaborate Greek Revival building. Beside it, on a side street, stands Vernon's office, built in the form of a miniature classical temple.

By mid-century, the Italianate style was manifested in Middletown by several dwellings along Paradise Avenue and by the Isaac Sherman House at 1228 East Main Road and the Gould House at 1199 West Main Road. A pair of summer estates, Richard Upjohn's Hamilton Hoppin House (1856-1857) and the Van Rensselaer House (c. 1860), both on Miantonomi Avenue, are very early examples of the newly popular Modern Gothic for summer-house use. Upjohn also designed the Gothic-style Church of the Holy Cross, built in 1845 at the corner of West Main Road and Oliphant Lane.

Middletown's rural simplicity--particularly the beauty of the southern part of town, where avenues along the beaches led past rugged and overhanging cliffs--was recognized for its "delightful calm," (according to a contemporary source). Bailey's Farm, near Third Beach, became the residence of a "Southern gentlewoman" in the 1830s; other families took up residence or began boarding here, and by mid-century Paradise Avenue was already graced by a number of fine summer houses.

The growth of Newport's summer colony after the Civil War resulted in an effort, spearheaded by Eugene Sturtevant, to make Middletown the "court end of the island." A large amount of money was sunk into road building and lots were laid out on a large tract of land along the Sakonnet River. Although Newport's Ocean Drive was opened about this time and the tide of fashion swept westward, the Indian Avenue area developed on a small scale, with the first purchases being made by Philadelphia and Hartford families. Edwin Booth, the noted actor, built a house, Boothden, here. A fine fieldstone English Gothic chapel, the Berkeley Memorial Chapel (later, St. Columba), was designed by Philadelphia architect Wilson Eyre and built in this area in 1884. Several other large summer estates were located along the Sakonnet River.

A syndicate of Boston investors laid out a compound of six Shingle Style houses, known as the Land Trust Cottages, at the eastern end of Easton's Beach in 1886-1887 under the guidance of

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Frederick Law Olmsted, one of America's outstanding landscape architects.

Other outstanding late-nineteenth century houses along and near the ocean in the vicinity of Easton's Point, also purchased and laid by a syndicate of Boston businessmen, include the Shingle Style Lyman C. Josephs House (1882-1883) at 436 Walcott Avenue, entered in the National Register; Judge Bookstaver's Shingle Style house (1885), at the corner of Kane Avenue and Second Beach Road; Sea View (1881) on Tuckerman Road; and the Shingle Style John Bancroft House (The Bluff), at 675 Tuckerman Road. Mariemont is a large Colonial Revival structure along Green End Avenue at Honeyman Hill. Other examples of late Victorian summer cottages, some of them on a less elaborate scale, are found throughout town, including a Second Empire house at 201 Oliphant Lane and the E. M. Peckham House at 145 Prospect Avenue.

The town grew slowly but steadily in the late nineteenth century; a number of extant public buildings reflect that growth. In 1885 a new Middletown Town Hall was built in a Colonial Revival style. It replaced the original town hall which had been built on the site on East Main Road in 1813-1814. Several noteworthy surviving schoolhouses of the late nineteenth century include the Paradise School (1876) , on Paradise Avenue, entered in the National Register; the Oliphant School (1882), on West Main Road; and the Witherbee School, at the corner of Valley Road and Green End Avenue.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In the early years of the twentieth century, the advantages of Middletown as a summer retreat continued to be recognized. Shingle Style houses remained popular; good examples are the A. R. White House at the corner of Second Beach Road and Kane Avenue and a gambrel-roof structure on Wolcott Avenue which is a simpler version of the nearby Josephs Hose. Tudor Revival houses are well exemplified by the Russell Nevins, Jr., House on Kane Avenue and a house at the corner of Second Beach Road and Ashurst Lane. In the Paradise Hills, a chateau-style manor house was built to blend with its well landscaped setting.

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St. George's School, founded in 1896, grew considerably in the early twentieth century; its Gothic chapel (1926) is a prominent landmark and one of the finest efforts by Ralph Adams Cram, the noted American architect who specialized in Gothic ecclesiastical designs. The interior of the chapel is a superb, dramatic space--one of the handsomest church interiors in Rhode Island.

The twentieth century ushered in the age of the automobile, but Middletown maintained a relatively slow and steady growth rate, despite improvements to the main roads and the completion of the Mount Hope Bridge in 1929. The Floradale Motor Court (1929) on East Main Road is a good example of an early automobile-age motel; its small, separate cabins are arranged around a landscaped lawn. Well maintained and still in use, this is one of the last motor courts in Rhode Island.

World War II and the post-war years had a tremendous impact on Aquidneck Island. Much of Middletown's Narragansett Bay shoreline came under Navy control. The Newport Naval Base was extended up the west side of Aquidneck Island and Coddington Cove became a port for a large fleet of destroyers. The hills above the cove were transformed, after centuries of use as farmland, into the Naval Underwater Systems Center, a military research facility of reinforced-concrete, "bomb-proof" structures. At Sachuest, also former farmland, the Navy built observation and fire-control towers after acquiring the peninsula in 1943.

The phenomenal war-time development included a great growth of military housing, including the Anchorage and Naval Gardens and private housing developments in the western part of Middletown. Between 1940 and 1950, Middletown's population increased by 4000, a 119 per cent increase, to a total of 7382 residents. Accompanying residential development was a great increase in commercial establishments, mostly strip development along the lower East and West Main Roads, where shopping centers, restaurants, fast-food shops, supermarkets, motels, carlots, gasoline stations and so on sprung up to serve the large military population and their dependents. Between 1950 and 1960, the town's population grew by 72 percent, to a total of 12,675; in the 1940s and 1950s, Middletown was the fastest growing town in Rhode Island. However, after the withdrawal of most Navy

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personnel from Rhode Island in 1974, the town's pace of growth was slowed abruptly.

Post-war residential development has consisted mostly of split-level and ranch-style houses. Some areas, including part of Slate Hill Farm off East Main Road, have been built with more attention to architectural quality and landscaping. Individual examples of better-than-average post-war architectural styles are a board-and-batten residence along Second Beach Road, near Purgatory, the Beach House, along Second Beach; and the A-frame structure, formerly a real-estate office for Birchwood Homes off West Main Road; an A-frame used as a memorial building in the Newport Memorial Park; and a 1960s, concrete, center-island structure for a gasoline station along West Main Road.

Middletown's agriculture has changed radically since the war. Whereas earlier in the century the town's landscape was still rural, with most farms producing foodstuffs, today less than a half-dozen places can be classified as farms. Most of the former farmland--that not converted to military, commercial, residential, or other uses--is now planted to nursery stock, and nurseries have become an important industry on Aquidneck Island.

F. Associated Property Types

I. Name of Property Type Educational Buildings (Primary and Secondary)

II. Description

III. Significance

IV. Registration Requirements

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 "Historic & Architectural Resources of Middletown, Rhode Island: A Preliminary Report," Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1979, pp. 41-2.

additional data: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional documentation:

- State historic preservation office
 Other State agency
 Federal agency

- Local government
 University
 Other

Specify repository: R.I. Historical Preservation Commission

I. Form Prepared By Walter Nebiker, Principal Hist. Preservation Specialist and
name/title Pamela Kennedy, Deputy Director
organization R.I. Historical Preservation Comm. date _____
street & number 150 Benefit Street telephone 401-277-2678
city or town Providence state Rhode Island zip code 02903

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II. Description

This property type includes buildings and structures which were built and used for educational purposes. In Middletown, all examples of this property type are primary and secondary schools; no institutions of higher learning were ever constructed here.

Examples of the type will date from the 18th century (when the first schools were constructed) through the 20th century. Middletown schools are, for the most part, small in size and scale. They range from the 1-room schools favored by the town in the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries, to somewhat larger consolidated schools dating from the mid-20th century. Most are constructed of wood. The earlier schools are characterized by paired entrances and square belfries. All are vernacular structures, rural adaptations of architectural styles popular in urban locations.

Middletown schools are dispersed throughout the town (reflecting the town's school district system) and are located adjacent to roads (for easy access). They are located on small lots and National Register boundaries will encompass the lot historically associated with the school. Some schools may have small adjacent auxiliary structures (wood sheds, privies, etc.).

III. Significance

Middletown's schools are significant for their associations with the patterns of settlement and development in the town; for their association with the history of government and education in the town; as rare, typical, or fine examples of school architecture; or as contributing components of larger districts. Middletown schools may qualify for the Register under Criterion A or C; in addition, some schools may have an archeological component.

The earliest school in Middletown predates the creation of the town itself. A school is said to have been built in 1701 or 1702 when Middletown was still part of Newport. This first school no longer stands, and its location and appearance are unknown. Other schools may have been kept on an occasional basis in the 18th century, but the organization of public education in

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Rhode Island was not regularized in this period. Only a single 18th-century school survives in Middletown, the 1784 Peabody School, a small 1½-story frame building with a belfry. Few educational buildings from this century survive in the state as a whole--the preservation of this one is remarkable.

Middletown's government constructed few buildings in its first century, between 1731 and 1830; indeed, the first Town Hall was not built until 1813. But the passage of state legislation in 1828 led to the construction of a series of small schools. This landmark school law required each Rhode Island town to divide itself into school districts, set up a school committee, and provide for the education of children. Middletown was divided into districts, and schools were constructed over the next few decades near the center of each district. Unfortunately, none of this set of original district schools survives. It is likely that most were small, 1-room structures. These schools were replaced in the late 19th and 20th centuries by new schools, on or near the same sites, and several of this group survive: the 1875 Paradise School; the 1882 Oliphant School; the 1907 Witherbee School; and the 1917 Berkeley School. All are 1-story, 1-room, frame structures. Through the mid-20th century, Middletown built a few additional schools; these were small, multi-room schools reflecting the change from ungraded to graded primary education. The town had no secondary schools until after World War II when the Middletown High School was constructed.

Criterion A

Area of Significance: Community Planning and Development--Middletown schools are significant because they can elucidate an important aspect of the town's development. Until the mid-20th century, the town remained a rural, sparsely-settled area with no town center. The small, 1-room schools dispersed through the town, set among farms on country roads and often isolated from other development, exemplify a pattern of settlement which was characteristic of Middletown until recent decades.

Area of Significance: Politics/Government--In a rural, sparsely-settled area such as Middletown, schools represent and illustrate an historically limited government. In contrast to other more

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urbanized areas of Rhode Island, until the mid-20th century, Middletown's government was required to perform few functions on a regular basis--maintenance of land records, control of farm animals, regulation of fences, minor road building, etc. From the middle of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century, the provision of education to rural farm families represented the most sustained and expensive effort of the town government. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, the school committee was a significant component of the town government. Surviving schools represent in physical form the major civic enterprise of town government.

Area of Significance: Education--School buildings are significant because they can illustrate important aspects of the history of education. Especially important in Middletown are the historical impact of state legislation on local schools, illustrated by the construction of district schools following the landmark state law of 1828; the change from ungraded to graded primary education in the mid-20th century, illustrated by the construction of multi-room schools in the 1930s and after; and the development of a distinction between primary and secondary education (reflected in school construction only in the period following World War II).

Criterion C

Area of Significance: Architecture--Middletown schools are significant for their ability to exemplify periods, styles, and types of school construction. Mid-19th and early 20th century schools, especially, document the balloon frame construction favored for such buildings. The application of decorative details (brackets, patterned shingles, etc.) derived from sophisticated architectural styles can illustrate the adaptation by vernacular builders of urban styles to unsophisticated rural buildings.

Schools in a district--Apart from their individual significance, school buildings can make a contribution to the sense of time and place in an eligible historic district. In Middletown, where the characteristic historic landscape is created by narrow country roads, farms, fields, and isolated institutional buildings (such as a church or grange hall), the presence of a schoolhouse

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constructed during the district's period of significance adds to the historic feeling of the place.

Criteria D

Several of Middletown's historic schools are constructed on or near the site of previous schools; for example, both Oliphant and Witherbee Schools replaced earlier schoolhouses on their sites. There may be an archeological component to the significance of some schools. No testing has taken place to determine the extent or character of sub-surface resources nor has their potential significance been evaluated. Historical archeological resources will be evaluated in a separate Multiple Property Submission.

Criteria Considerations: No nominations for properties generally excluded from the Register are anticipated in this context.

Level of Evaluation: Examples of this property type will be evaluated in a local context. The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Plan establishes contexts for evaluation whose spatial component for historic above-ground resources is determined by town and neighborhood boundaries. Most properties are thus evaluated in a local context and are measured against other similar properties within town and neighborhood boundaries (see Rhode Island Historic Preservation Plan, 1989). A single known exception in this property type in Middletown is St. George's School (1901 et seq.), an Episcopal preparatory school located off Second Beach Road. The school dates from 1896, when the Rev. George Diman founded the school in Newport. The relocation of St. George's to Middletown occurred in 1901, and the school now occupies a handsome campus which includes several historic buildings on a large rural tract. The complex includes dining halls, gymnasium, and classroom buildings; among the most significant are Diman Hall (Howe & Church, architects), a Georgian Revival structure, and the Chapel (Ralph Adams Cram, architect), a Gothic Revival composition. St. George's is most suitably evaluated in a broader than local context: its leadership, historical development, building history, patterns of patronage, and architectural development have taken place in a larger (state- or region-wide) context and have not had the same

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intimate historical connections to patterns of development, education, and government in the local town context as have Middletown's other schools.

Known related properties: Six Middletown properties of this type are known and recorded:

- 1) Peabody School (1794, Third Beach Road): 1 1/2-stories, end-gable, clapboarded frame structure; paired front entrances; square belfry.
- 2) Paradise School (1875, Paradise Avenue): 1-story clapboard frame structure; paired front entrances with bracketed hoods; 1 room.
- 3) Oliphant School (1882, West Main Road): 1 1/2 stories, end-gable, shingled, frame structure; enclosed hip-roof entry; square belfry; 1 room with later ell.
- 4) Witherbee School (1907, Green End Avenue): 1-story, end-gable, shingled frame structure; square corner tower; arched, recessed center entry; 1 room.
- 5) Berkeley School (1917, Green End Avenue): 1-story, hip-roof, shingled frame structure.
- 6) Peckham School (1940?, Green End Avenue): Attached to Berkeley School.

III. Registration Requirements

1. Integrity: In general, to be eligible for the Register a school must retain sufficient integrity to illustrate in physical form its significance. Integrity of location is required for all eligible properties in this type. Integrity of the characteristic setting of schools in Middletown is expected and will enhance significance, but is not required.

Varying levels of integrity of design and materials are established for schools of different eras. Surviving schools from the period before the Rhode Island state school law of 1828 are extremely rare and need not demonstrate so high a level of

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integrity as later schools. Pre-1830 schools will be considered sufficiently well preserved to meet the registration requirements if they retain in their exterior form, materials, and design the identifying characteristics of a school. It is not expected that interior arrangements or finishes will retain their integrity. Schools constructed after 1830 will exhibit a higher level of integrity in order to qualify for the Register. Post-1830 schools will retain integrity to a sufficient level to illustrate their original appearance. Minor adaptations and alterations are expected, but an eligible school will at a minimum retain its original form, scale, exterior materials, and floor plan. The presence of at least some original interior finishes (plaster walls, flooring, etc.) is expected. For schools dating from the last two decades of usual eligibility (the 1920s and 30s) an exceptionally high level of integrity is required, sufficient to distinguish an individual example from all others of its age in the same context. The integrity of any school may be enhanced by the presence of original furnishings (desks, blackboards, etc.), but this is not a requirement.

2. Associative qualities and physical characteristics: To be eligible for the Register under Criteria A, a school will exhibit in its history an important pattern of the community's settlement and development, an important aspect of the history of education in Middletown, or a significant pattern in the historical operation of town government.

To be eligible for the National Register under Criterion C, a school will be a rare, typical, or fine example of school architecture. A school may be eligible because it is a rare survivor of a once-larger group. The nomination for such a school will demonstrate that a larger class once existed and now exists in only a limited fashion. A school may be eligible as a typical example of a larger group. The nomination for such a school will identify and describe the larger group and explain how the nominated example typifies the class. A school may be eligible for the Register as an unusually fine example of school architecture. The nomination for such a school will identify and demonstrate the superior architectural value of such a school, distinguishing it from others by its greater beauty and sophistication.

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A school may be a contributing element of a larger district. As important components of a community which developed over time, a school may make a contribution to the historic character of a district even if it is not individually eligible. To make such a contribution, a school must have been constructed during the district's period of significance.

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The survey of Middletown's historic resources was begun in 1978 and completed in 1979. The survey was undertaken by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission. Some supplemental survey work has been undertaken in the years since 1979, and a preliminary archeological survey has been completed.

The Middletown survey is part of the Historical Preservation Commission's on-going effort to prepare a statewide inventory of sites, buildings, districts, and objects important to Rhode Island's history and pre-history. The products of the survey--survey sheets, published survey report, and maps--are valuable resources for local, state, and federal planning. They identify the resources which should be taken into consideration when projects are undertaken which may affect them.

The Commission's surveys include four phases of work: field survey, preparation of maps, historical research, and preparation of a final preservation report. A standard survey form, which includes historical, pre-historical, and architectural/physical information and an identifying photograph, is prepared for each site, building, or object included in the survey. Historical information is obtained through the use of historic maps, published and unpublished histories, guide-books, manuscripts, newspapers and periodicals, deed research, census materials, and local and state records, as well as from knowledgeable local residents. All data will be included in the Rhode Island Historic Resources Database.

Essential data is transferred from the survey forms to a townwide survey map which indicates location, style or period, map number, and architectural and historical ratings. Detailed maps for areas of special interest and density have also been prepared. In addition, properties on the National Register or which appear to be eligible are entered on the Rhode Island Statewide Planning Department's computerized mapping system to insure that data is widely available.

The preservation report is based on the field survey and on additional historical research. Its core is a comprehensive history which focuses on the physical development of the town, from the time of aboriginal inhabitation to the present, as revealed in the town's present morphology, topography, and natural setting, as well as in such physical evidence of human

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settlement as aboriginal sites, roads and stone walls, farm complexes, hamlets, and individual buildings. The historical narrative is followed by preservation planning recommendations, including the identification of properties which appear to meet the National Register eligibility criteria.

The preservation report, and the recommendations it includes, were reviewed by local officials including the Middletown Town Council, the Planning Board, and the Town Clerk; knowledgeable local residents; planners at state agencies including the Department of Environmental Management and the Statewide Planning Department; and by the Commission and Commission staff. Upon publication of the report, a copy of all survey material is placed on public file at the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission's office and in the Town of Middletown. Each set of materials includes the completed survey forms, a copy of the survey map, and the final report.

The survey was conducted by a qualified geographer and historian; its results were reviewed by qualified historians, architectural historians, archaeologists, and architects. The list of properties recommended for the National Register was reviewed by the Rhode Island Review Board.

Historic contexts are defined by the process outlined in the "Rhode Island Historic Preservation Plan" (1989). The typology of properties (only one type is identified and evaluated here) is based on historic function; a standard list of 21 property types is used throughout the state and for all contexts. Other property types in Middletown may be evaluated in the future. The requirements for integrity are based on knowledge of the condition of existing properties, as all properties included in the geographical limits of the context were examined prior to evaluation.