UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Hartford

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NAME			CABLE SE		
INAME					
HISTORIC	A A				
AND/OR COMMON					
High	land Historic Distric	2t			
LOCATION	Intersection o				
STREET & NUMBER	beginning to 227 At Club Road	kins Street;	1409 <b>-14</b> 2	23, 1254-1456	Country
				OT FOR PUBLICATION	
CITY, TOWN	Middletown N/A			ONGRESSIONAL DISTR	
STATE		CODE		COUNTY	CODE
	Connecticut	09	Middle	esex	007
CLASSIFICA	TION				
CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS		PRES	ENTUSE
X_DISTRICT	PUBLIC	X_OCCUPIED		X_AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
BUILDING(S)	PRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED		COMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTURE	<b>Х</b> вотн	-WORK IN PROGRESS	5	EDUCATIONAL	X_PRIVATE RESIDE
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE		ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS
OBJECT	IN PROCESS	X_YES: RESTRICTED		GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTED	I	_INDUSTRIAL	TRANSPORTATIO
	N/A	NO		MILITARY	OTHER:
OWNER OF			·		
NAME	Multiple Owner	ship (See Cont	inuatior	Sheet)	
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Shielianomben	"	11			
CITY, TOWN				STATE	
11	N <u>/A</u>	VICINITY OF			
LOCATION	OF LEGAL DESCR	IPTION			
COURTHOUSE.					
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ET	<sup>C.</sup> Middletown Cit	y and Town Cle	erk		
STREET & NUMBER					
	1 DeKoven Driv	e			
CITY, TOWN				STATE	
DEDDECENT	Middletown	NCCUDVEN	C	CT	
REPRESENT	TATION IN EXISTI	ING SUKVEY	5		
TÎTLE	State Register	of Historic H	laces		
DATE					
1982		FEDERA	L X_STATE	COUNTYLOCAL	
DEPOSITORY FOR					
SURVEY RECORDS	Connecticut Hi	st <mark>orical Com</mark> mi	ission		
CITY, TOWN	Hartford			STATE CT	



	CONDITION	CHECK ONE	CHECK C	NE
	DETERIORATED	UNALTERED		SITE
🕱 GOOD	RUINS	X_ALTERED	<b>X</b> MOVED	DATE
FAIR	UNEXPOSED			

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Highland is a rural neighborhood located in the extreme northwest corner of Middletown, Connecticut. The houses are spaced well apart along the two tree-lined roads which intersect there, Atkins Street and Country Club Road. Behind many of the houses there are open fields, as well as wooded areas where pastures have become grown over. The land is high at either end of the L-shaped proposed district, but it slopes gradually toward the intersection, where the ground is rather swampy around the edge of Highland Lake. That body of water is largely hidden from the two streets by vegetation and was not included. A smaller pond on the same brook lies just across Atkins Street and was included, as was a breached rubble dam just upstream. There is a small 19th century cemetery with a stone wall and large deciduous trees located just about in the middle of the district, on Atkins Street.

Of the fifteen houses in the district, four are from the 18th century:  $2\frac{1}{2}$ story, clapboarded, central chimney structures with the ridges of their gable roofs parallel to the road. Five, four, and three-bay facades are represented, but all have their entrance near the center. Four others are from the early 19t century, and unlike their plainer 18th-century neighbors, these have the Classically-inspired ornament of the Federal and Greek Revival styles: molded cornices treated as pediments, pilastered doorways, and semi-elliptical fanlights. Two of the early 19th-century houses have the gable-end-to-thestreet orientation which superceded the more traditional placement of the house. Though all of these houses have been altered in one way or another, nearly all have had significant historical material preserved. The more modern houses in the district include a shingled Colonial Revival house from 1915 and six recent ranch, Cape Cod, or Garrison-type houses. Because the modern houses are generally set far back from the street, and because of the topography, which makes the older houses at the intersection and at the higher elevations more visible, the visual effect of the modern residences is less than the proportion alone would suggest.

The boundaries of the district were delineated primarily by visual criteria. The interchange for the interstate highway provides a strong physical and visual barrier at the east end. Modern residential development west on Country Club Road and north on Atkins Street creates a strong contrast to the older houses of the district. Generally, the rear property lines of the house lots were followed to determine the district boundary's distance from the roads, necessarily cutting across large field lots in between. In this way, representative open land was included without excessive acreage. To the east along the lower part of Atkins Street, the edge of Highland Lake (also a property line) was taken as the boundary.

More detailed descriptions accompany the inventory which follows.

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Highland Historic District Middletown, CT

CONTINUATION SHE	ET ITEM NUMBER 4	PAGE 1	
	OM MIDDLETOWN ASSESSOR'S RECORDS, JA ers keyed to Part 7 and Map	NUARY, 1980	
BLOCK LOT ADDRESS		TRIBUTING/ CONTRIBUTING	INVENTORY #
9 <b>-1</b> 55 Atkins Street	Olander, Philip B. & Erma C.	NC	14
9 <b>-1</b> 30 Atkins Street	Wilcox Cemetery Association c/o Horace C. Wilcox, Jr. 104 Neck Road, Madison, CT 06443	NC	Cemetery
9-1 29 141 Atkins Street	Michalke, Robert J. & Elizabeth M.	NC	15
9 <b>-1 29A</b> 125 Atkins Street	Powelzyk, Frances & Eva	NC	16
9-1 28 155-159 Atkins St	McGee, Jerome F. & Suzanne L. reet	С	4
9-1 27 197-199 Atkins St	Olander, <sup>R</sup> aymond J. & Virginia M. reet	С	3
9-1 27A 197 Atkins Street	Olander, Paul A. & Evelyn M.	с	2
9-1 25 227 Atkins Street	Renschen, Patrick D. & Virginia	С	l
14-1 118B Atkins Street	City of Middletown l DeKoven Drive Middletown, CT	NC	Land only
<b>14-1 1</b> Atkins Street	Gordon, Eric & Ellen 301 Bell Street Middletown, CT	NC	Land only
9-2 l 136 Atkins Street	Soyster, Thomas W. & Filomena M.	С	6
9-2 2 154 Atkins Street	Knight, William T. & Josephine A.	с	5
9-2 3 Atkins Street	Olander, Paul A. & Evelyn M. 197 Atkins Street Middletown, CT 06457	NC	Land only

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Highland Historic District M.ddletown, CT

CONTINUATION SHEE	T ITEM NUMBER 4	PAGE 2	
9-2 3A Atkins Street	Olander, Raymond J. & Virginia M.	NC	Land only
9-2 4 Atkins Street	Wilcox, Horace C. Jr. 104 Neck Road Madison, CT 06443	NC	Land only
14-1 2A 1254 Country Club	Budwitz, Jack & Beverly Road	С	10
14-1 2 1292 Country Club	Manthay, Theodore & Florence Road	NC	11
14-1 1A 1322 Country Club	Anderson, Margaret D. Road	NC	12
14-1 3 1340 Country Club	Anderson, Bruce R. & Betsey H. Road	NC	13
9-1 37 1456 Country Club	Anderson, Carl A. Sr. <u>et al</u> . Road	C	7
9-1 37A Country Club Road	Luciente, James D. 40 Jeffrey Lane Merid <b>en, C</b> T	NC	Land only
9-1 Country Club Road	Olander, Raymond & Virginia Atkins Street Mjddletown, CT	NC	Land only
14-2 5 1409 Country Club	Bickford, John H. & Annie C. Road	С	9
14-2 4A 1423 Country Club	Danielson, David A. & Barbara D. Road	с	8

All addresses unless specified are Middletown, CT 06457

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# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Highland Historic District Middletown, CT

> 6 PAGE 3 ITEM NUMBER **CONTINUATION SHEET**

Surveys (continued):

Middletown, Connecticut: Historical and Architectural Resources

1979 - Local

Greater Middletown Preservation Trust 27 Washington Street Middletown, CT 06457

Volume II, numbers 1-3 and 61-62

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Highland Historic District Middletown, CT

### CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE

Inventory of structures which contribute to the character of the district:

### Atkins Street

- JOSEPH WILCOX HOUSE, c. 1774, 2½ stories, 5-bay facade with central, doubledoor entrance, ridge of gable roof parallel to the road. North wing, c.1812; southwest wing c.1875. Clapboarded, brownstone foundation, central brick chimney. Some small-pane sash. Slight overhang to second and attic stories. Interior detail includes raised-panel walls, fireplaces, two corner cupboards, and in the north ell, a wainscot grained with trompe l'oeil panelling. Photos 1 & 2.
- 2. HEZEKIAH SAGE HOUSE, c. 1770, 2<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> stories, 3-bay facade with central entrance, ridge of gable roof parallel to the road. Later south wing and rear ell. Clapboarded, brick central stack, brownstone foundation. Overhang of second and attic stories. Later two-story entrance porch has gable roof with Queen Anne half-timbered effect in the gable. Interior detail includes fireplaces and panelled walls. Photo 3.
- 3. LARGE BARN, c.1870 (?), c.1920. Northernmost part is older, has vertical board siding, round-arched loft windows, large door on cast strap hinges on the long side, and a gable roof. Newer part has a gambrel roof, rear. horizontal feather-edged weatherboarding. Photo 4. New livestock building to
- 4. Colonial Revival House, 1915, 2½ stories, 3-bay facade, ridge of gable roof parallel to the road. Partial cornice return, small-pane sash, wood-shingled exterior, brick chimney on south side. Porch along south side and two-story porch sheltering the central entrance. Latter has Tuscan columns, enclosed second level, and shallow-pitched roof treated as a pediment. Photo 5. Garage and apartment to rear made out of old building.
- 5. Greek Revival House, c. 1830, 1½ stories, 3-bay facade, ridge parallel to the road. Clapboarded, full cornice return across gable end. Has been altered to Bungalow with extension of roof to form a porch across the front and addition of a central hipped dormer. Said to have been a schoolhouse moved to this site. Photo 6.
- 6. JOHN WARNER HOUSE, "Brookfield Farm," c.1750, 2½ stories, 4 bays,clapboarded, brownstone foundation, brick central stack. Windows have six-over-six sash, offset central entrance has panelled door, overlight. Small frame barn to rear, 19th-century, vertical board siding. Photo 7 & 8.

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Highland	Historic	District
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- 7. JEDIDIAH WILCOX HOUSE, c.1810, 2½ stories, 5-bay facade with central entrance, ridge of gable roof parallel to the road. Clapboarded exterior, two brick chimneys near ends, slate shingles on roofs of east and west wings, brownstone foundation. Semi-elliptical gable light leaded with radii and festoons. Elaborate entrance treatment has plain pilasters with entasis, leaded semi-elliptical fanlight, pediment with modillions and festoons. Photos 9 & 10.
- 8. Federal House, c.1815, 2½ stories, gable end to the street (road formerly curved in front of this house), 3-bay facade with offset entrance. Ell possibly earlier. Full cornice return. Brick central stack. Aluminum sided. Ell door has molded frame and cap, but transomed main entrance has Colonial Revival broken pediment treatment. Photo 11.
- 9. Greek Revival House, c. 1830, 1½ stories, gable end to the street, ell separately framed to the southwest. Partial return of molded cornice. Clapboarded exterior, brick central stack, brownstone foundation, six-over-six sash. Pilastered entrance has an elaborate, heavy series of cornice moldings over the transomed doorway, with breaks in the moldings over the pilsters, which are plain and exhibit an entasis. Modern open porch across the facade. Interior features include a simple hall stairway and original kitchen fireplace. Photos 11 & 12.
- 10. PHINEAS BACON HOUSE, 1756, 2½ stories, 5-bay facade with ridge of gable roof parallel to the road, central entrance with projecting cornice above. Clapboarded exterior, brick central stack, brownstone foundation, old eight-over-twelve sash in gable windows. Overhang of second and attic stories. Later two-over-two sash, bay window on west side. Interior has fireplaces and panelled walls. Outbuildings include several fairly recent sheds and a barn, and also one barn which may date to the 18th-century: it has a rubble foundation, frame of hewn members, large door on the broad side, and wrought-iron spade-end strap hinges on the front and rear doors. Vertical board siding is later. Photos 13 & 14.

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Highland Historic District - Middletown, CT

Buildings which do not contribute to the character of the district:

- 11. Modern (1957) ranch-style house. Photo 13, left.
- 12. Modern (1961) Cape-Cod type house.
- 13. Modern (1973) garrison-type house and large garage.
- 14. Modern (1956) ranch-style house.
- 15. Modern reproduction Cape-Cod type house. Photo 15, background.
- 16. Modern ranch-style house. Photo 15.

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# 6 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AF	REAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	ECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW	
PREHISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	RELIGION
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
	X_AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1699	X_ARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<b>X_</b> 1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
<b>X</b> _1800-1899	COMMERCE	EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
1900-	COMMUNICATIONS	★_INDUSTRY INVENTION	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	OTHER (SPECIFY)
SPECIFIC DA	TES See Item 7	BUILDER/ARCH	HITECT See Item 7	

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The proposed National Register district for the Highland area of Middletown includes a number of houses which are good examples of the vernacular architecture of the 18th and early 19th centuries (Criterion C). Indeed, some are considered among the most important old houses in Middletown, according to the recent survey of that town's historic resources cited herein. In addition to their architectural significance, these buildings are important for local history: they are associated with and illustrate something of the lives of the small farmers and craftsmen who were the early residents of the area. Although most of the surrounding region has been developed during recent years, Highland is one neighborhood which still retains much of the atmosphere of an early rural settlement, thereby preserving a chapter in the history of the town's development (Criterion A).

The four 18th-century houses (#'s 1, 2, 6, and 10; Photos 1-3, 7, and 13) typify the rural building pattern of the period: all are clapboarded, gable roofed, central chimney houses. In addition to the usual five-bay facade found in two of the houses, one house has a three-bay facade, a common variant in the East Berlin-Cromwell-Middletown area, and one has a four-bay facade, an arrangement shown in early views of Middletown but quite rare today. The Highland neighborhood thus illustrates both the common 18thcentury practice as well as variation from the norm. Three of the houses have the raised-panel wall treatment which is typical of 18th-century interiors. Of these, the Joseph Wilcox House (Photo 2) is considered one of the finest and most complete interiors in the town. Its many original features constitute an outstanding historic resource: the panelling, pilasters, cupboards, and grained wainscot illustrate the breadth of early American craftsmanship.

Of the 19th-century houses, the Jedidiah Wilcox house (#7; Photos 9 and 10) is one of the few remaining Federal-style houses in Middletown, and its entrance is the most elaborate example of a Federal doorway in the town. The thin pilasters and delicate modillions and swag molding epitomize the Adamesque aesthetic of light, freely adapted Classical ornament, first developed by the Scottish architect, Robert Adam. The finely leaded transom and gable light are also notable in a rural house, where wooden muntins were more common in fanlights. In contrast to the Jedidiah Wilcox house is the Greek Revival house, #9 (Photos 11 and 12), built about 1835. Although the composition of its doorway \_ pilasters and breaks in a molded cornice - is not much different from what might have been built twenty years earlier, the proportions are decidedly bolder: the pilasters are wider, the entablature with its plethora of moldings is much heavier and projects more than would be typical of the earlier period, and the elegant lines of the semi-elliptical arch have been eliminated in favor of the rectilinear lines appropriate to the post-and-lintel emphasis of Greek architecture. Together, the two houses exemplify well the two dominent historical styles of the early 19th century.

9 MAJOR BIBL	IOGRAPHICAL REFER	ENCES		
Commemorative E	Biographical Record of M	iddlesex County	. Chicago: J.H. Be	ers, 19
	<u>Centennial</u> Address. Mi		-	
May, Earl C. <u>Ce</u>	entury of Silver, 1847-1	947. New York:	McBride & Company.	1947.
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VERBAL BOUNDAR	Y DESCRIPTION			
	see continuation she	et		
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N/A	N/A	<u>N/A</u>	N/A	
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	Bruce Clouette, Con	sultant		
ORGANIZATION	Connecticut Histori	cal Commission	DATE January 30,	, 1980
STREET & NUMBER	59 South Prospect S	treet	TELEPHONE	
CITY OR TOWN			(203) 566-3005 STATE	
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Highland Historic District Middletown, CT

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Although the other two 19th-century houses are less well-preserved than the foregoing, they nevertheless contribute to the character of the district. The Federal-period house #8 (Photo 11) has the gable-end-to-the-road orientation and returned cornice meant to suggest a Classical temple, a form which was introduced in that period and became common in later Greek Revival houses like the adjacent #9. Although #5, a former schoolhouse moved to the site, is considerably altered, its Greek Revival origin is clearly evident in its wide frieze and full cornice return.

Highland was part of Westfield, an area settled in the early 18th century. Like Cromwell, East Berlin, and Middlefield, Westfield was a farming community within the town of Middletown, though some distance from the incorporated City that was a busy port in the 18th century. Eventually, these rural parishes all became separate towns, with the exception of Westfield, which remained part of Middletown. Among the first settlers of Westfield were John Warner, whose house is #6 (photo 7), and the Bacon and Wilcox families, represented by houses 10, 1 and 7 (Photos 13, 1, and 9).

Almost all the early families were engaged in farming, and the district recalls this lifestyle with its widely spaced houses, open fields and woodlots and its several barns (Photos 13, 4, and 8). One of these, the barn with #10 (Photos 13 and 14) is especially significant. It represents the type of barn common in the 18th century, with its heavy hewn frame, wrought iron strap hinges, and large openings on the broad sides. This arrangement facilitated threshing, which relied on a stiff breeze blowing through the barn, before mechanical threshers were common. Today, when so much of the region has aquired a suburban character, Highland is unusual in retaining much of its rural ambience, created by its old houses, barns and working farms.

The early residents of Highland supplemented their farming by crafts and other activities. Phineas Bacon (#10) was a tanner and a shoemaker, and also kept a tavern. John Warner (#6) also was a shoemaker, and owned an interest in a sawmill and a great number of farming implements as well. Jedidiah Wilcox (#7) hauled goods overland from New Haven to Boston with his teams when the War of 1812 closed off the coastal shipping. Later in the 19th century, Asa Roberts and his son Darius, who lived in the adjacent houses south of the intersection (#8 and 9), carried on a suspender and corset shop on the premises. They also kept bees and were farmers as well. Nineteenthcentury maps show two blacksmith shops, a sawmill, and a shop which made tinsmith's tools, all within the bounds of the present district. The two ponds and ruined dam today remain to suggest the small-scale industry which was part of the people's lives in that locale.

Most of these early enterprises were ephemeral, typical of small preindustrial shops and mills, but the activities of one family, the Wilcoxes, had a larger effect on the industrial history of the state. The Wilcox family is connected with three houses in the district: #1, 2 (bought from the

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ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 8

Sage family in 1816) and #7. They owned saw mills, a cider mill, blacksmith shops, and extensive farmland. Like many young men of the area, Horace Wilcox (1824-1890) got started in the tinware business, the center of which for the entire nation was in nearby Berlin. From a beginning as a tinware peddler, Horace Wilcox became interested in the manufacture of tableware, eventually moving to Meriden, where with his brother Dennis he formed the Meriden Britannia Company. Another Wilcox, Jedidiah (not the teamster), started out as a carpet bag and corset maker, but he too turned to tableware in Meriden, forming in 1865 the Wilcox Britannia Company. Although Meriden ultimately became the silverware capital of the country, this important Connecticut industry has its roots in the small-scale crafts of Highland.

The rural atmosphere was one of the things which attracted well-to-do vacationers to Highland at the end of the 19th century. There was at one time a large hotel and later an extensive golf course just opposite the Joseph Wilcox House (#1). Guests arrived on the railroad (later a trolley line) whose abandoned grade can still be discerned near Wilcox Cemetery. They came to enjoy the country air, relax, and drink Higby Mountain spring water, bottled at the Highland Hotel. It was in this period that the area became known as Highland, previously being simply a part of Westfield. Today there are few traces of this phase of Highland's history: the south ell of the Joseph Wilcox House was built to accomodate the hotel's extra guests, and the porch on the Sage house (#2; photo 3) and the Colonial Revival House (#2; photo 5) date from this period, indicating that time did not stop in 1835. Although little remains of Highland's resort phase, the same rural nature which drew turn-of-the-century visitors to the place remains largely intact, and makes Highland a valuable setting for the many historic houses of the district.

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PAGE 9 9 CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER

Bibliography (continued):

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Maps:

County Atlas of Middlesex, Connecticut. New York: F.W. Beers, 1874.

Walling, H.F. Map of Middlesex County. New York: H. & C.T. Smith, 1859.

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES **INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

Highland Historic District Middletown, CT CONTINÚATION SHEET

**ITEM NUMBER** 

10 PAGE 10

UTM References:

A: 18/688620/4604600

- B: 18/688650/4604250
- C: 18/688710/4604250
- D: 18/688680/4604060 E: 18/688750/4604040
- F: 18/688850/4604140
- G: 18/688880/4604040 H: 18/689180/4604100
- I: 18/689190/4603960
- J: 18/688720/4603860
- K: 18/688740/4603680
- L: 18/688570/4603660 M: 18/688620/4603830
- N: 18/688440/4603790
- 0: 18/688400/4603900
- P: 18/688300/4604050
- Q: 18/688320/4604540
- R: 18/688460/4604540
- S: 18/688460/4604580

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Verbal Boundary Description:

Beginning at the northeast corner of Lot 4, Block 9-2, as shown on Middletown Assesor's Map 3, the district boundary runs southerly along the eastern bound of Lot 4 to that lot's southeast corner, and then runs in a straight line to the northeast corner of Lot 2, Block 9-2. It then follows the eastern line of Lots 2 and 1 to Saw Mill Road. It crosses the road running due east and continues in a straight line to the edge of Highland Lake. It follows the edge of Highland Lake southerly and then easterly until it comes to a point in a line with the eastern bound of Lot 3, Block 14-1. It then runs southerly along that line and then runs easterly across Lot 2 in line with the northern boundary of Lot 2A. It follows the line of Lot 2A to Bell Street and then runs southerly along the western edge of Bell Street to Country Club Road. It runs westerly along the northern edge of Country Club Road and then crosses it in a line with the eastern bound of Lot 5, Block 14-2. It runs southerly along the eastern line of that lot to a point in a line with the southern bound of Lot 4A and follows the line of that lot westerly and then northerly, continuing across the former course of the road to the present Country Club Road. It crosses the road and runs westerly along the northern edge to the southwest corner of Lot 37, Block 9-1. It continues northerly along the western boundary of Lot 37 to the northwest corner. From there, it crosses Lots 37A and 55 in a northwesterly direction to a point on the boundary between Lots 32 and 55 which is in line with the western bound of Lot 29. It follows this line northerly to the southwest corner of Lot 29, continues in a straight line along the western line of that lot, and continues across Lot 27 to the southwest corner of Lot 25. It runs northerly and then easterly along the line of that lot, crosses Atkins Street, and then runs northerly along the eastern edge of Atkins Street to the northwest corner of Lot 4, Block 9-2. It then runs easterly along the line of that lot to the first point.

