

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

NEWPORT HISTORIC DISTRICT

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United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: Newport Historic District

Other Name/Site Number:

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Bounded roughly by Van Zandt Avenue, Newport Harbor, Thames Street, Pope Street, William Street, Bellevue Avenue, Bull Street, Broadway, and Kingston Street

Not for publication:

City/Town: Newport

Vicinity:

State: RI County: Newport Code: 005 Zip Code: 02840

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: x
Public-Local: x
Public-State: x
Public-Federal: x

Category of Property

Building(s):
District: x
Site:
Structure:
Object:

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing
1331
10
2
1343

Noncontributing
120 buildings
1 sites
0 structures
objects
121 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1305

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing:

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ____ Entered in the National Register
- ____ Determined eligible for the National Register
- ____ Determined not eligible for the National Register
- ____ Removed from the National Register
- ____ Other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: DOMESTIC COMMERCE/TRADE SOCIAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION RELIGION FUNERARY RECREATION AND CULTURE AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE DEFENSE LANDSCAPE	Sub: Single Dwelling; Multiple Dwelling Business; Financial Institution Civic Capitol; Fire Station; Post Office; Courthouse School; Library Religious Facility; Church School; Church-related Residence Cemetery Sports Facility; Outdoor Recreation Processing Arms Storage Park
Current: DOMESTIC COMMERCE Store; SOCIAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION RELIGION Residence FUNERARY RECREATION AND CULTURE LANDSCAPE	Sub: Single Dwelling; Multiple Dwelling; Hotel Business; Professional; Financial Institution; Specialty Restaurant Civic Post Office Library; School Religious Facility; Church School; Church-related Cemetery Theater; Museum; Sports Facility; Outdoor Recreation Park

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:

COLONIAL: Post-medieval; Georgian

EARLY REPUBLIC: Federal

MID 19TH CENTURY: Greek Revival; Gothic Revival; Italian Villa

LATE VICTORIAN: Gothic; Italianate; Second Empire; Queen Anne; Stick Style; Renaissance

LATE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS: Colonial Revival; Classical Revival; Beaux Arts

MATERIALS:

Foundation:

Walls: Wood (clapboard, shingle)

Roof:

Other:

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SUMMARY

The Newport Historic District (designated a National Historic Landmark in 1968) possesses extraordinary significance for its nationally important colonial architectural heritage, including both outstanding individual examples of Georgian design and a significant concentration of smaller modest houses. One of English colonial America's great seaport cities, Newport also retains a singular collection of buildings from its first two centuries. The circumstances of the city's later development have preserved the core of the colonial city.

The district's buildings are a laboratory of colonial architecture and the interrelationship between vernacular and academic architecture. The artistic design and craftsmanship traditions include not only the works of notable builders and architects, but also the houses and shops of illustrious furniture makers and other artisans. Valuable physical evidence of Newport's first period of exploration and settlement is preserved in buildings, street plan, and open spaces—in their exceptional number, density, and state of preservation, the district's historic resources portray the life of a colonial city.

The district is significant not only for its seventeenth- and eighteenth-century architectural legacy, but also for its nineteenth- and early twentieth-century buildings and intact neighborhoods and streetscapes—they chronicle the forces which shaped the city during its historic period from 1639 to the 1940s. Over the full course of Newport's progression from an agricultural and maritime settlement to a colonial seaport, an industrial and military center, and finally a summer resort, influential individuals, ideas, and events are embodied in the physical fabric of this district. Together, they form a highly distinctive entity, exceptional in its quality and character.

This nomination presents a boundary expansion for the district to include the Common Burying-Ground which was begun in 1640. This cemetery is a significant part of the story of the early years of Newport, and it presents the nation's social and artistic development in microcosm. As a resting place for everyman and anyman, the Common Burying-Ground reflects Roger Williams', the founder of Rhode Island, concept of brotherhood.

The nomination also provides additional and updated documentation for the district including a more complete survey of all of the resources in the district and whether they contribute or not to the national significance than the original 1968 documentation.

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

The Newport Historic District is a dense, waterfront, urban concentration of over 1,300 residential, commercial, institutional, and public buildings, along with historic designed park and cemetery landscapes, constructed between the 1670s and the early twentieth century.

The district forms the core of the historic maritime town of Newport and the city's present-day downtown. It contains three distinct sub-sections: the largely residential Point section north of the harbor, bordered by Van Zandt Avenue on the north and Farewell Street on the east; the West Broadway area, encompassing the major commercial spine along Broadway and its residential side streets, bordered by Warner and Kingston Avenues and Broadway; and the Hill, rising from Newport Harbor

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eastward to Bellevue Avenue from Washington Square south to Pope Street, historically known as Mile's End. Washington Square, formerly known as the Mall or Parade, is the geographic and symbolic center, the heart of early settlement, civic, and mercantile activities and the pivotal hub linking the district's neighborhoods.

The district's character is that of a highly distinctive and well preserved colonial city overlain with later nineteenth- through early-twentieth-century development. The colonial seaport city is defined by an outstanding collection of nearly 300 surviving seventeenth- and eighteenth-century buildings and by an irregular pattern of streets that was established in the eighteenth century. The presence of several hundred nineteenth-century buildings attests to the city's new era of growth as a summer resort from about 1840 into the early twentieth century when infill construction occurred in conjunction with the erection of fashionable mansions outside the town center. Contained within the district are singular examples of colonial and nineteenth-century public and domestic architecture representing the work of important period architects and builders, numerous exemplary high-style buildings, and, of equal importance, rows of small, vernacular houses and shops. Buildings are predominantly of wood-frame construction with gable, gambrel, hip, or mansard roofs and clapboard or shingle sheathing, one to three stories in height, and are set either close to or exactly at the sidewalk line on small lots. The handful of brick and stone buildings are mostly non-domestic. A variety of outbuildings, fences, lot landscaping treatments, walkway paving materials, and small public open spaces help complete the tightly woven texture of the streetscapes.

The major changes within the district in the twentieth century have been associated with urban renewal and harbor improvements from the 1950s through the 1970s and are concentrated along Thames Street. The waterfront and wharf areas west of Thames Street and south of Marsh Street have been excluded from the district due to demolition and relocation of historic buildings, the construction of new buildings, and the introduction of America's Cup Boulevard, a modern high running street along the waterfront. While the impact of these activities is undeniable, the effects are localized, and modern intrusions within the district are few. Substantial numbers of buildings in the waterfront areas and throughout the district have been restored through the efforts of private individuals, organizations, and the city. Those buildings that were moved and preserved on new sites within the district continue a well documented tradition of at least 200 years in Newport. The district contains over 1400 buildings, structures, and sites that contribute to its historic and architectural significance as a colonial seaport and nineteenth- and early twentieth-century resort community.

Newport is located at the southern end of Aquidneck Island, the largest island in Narragansett Bay, and sits at the entrance to the bay. The protected natural harbor on the western shore and the island's fertile soils and abundant forest resources provided important amenities for early settlement in the seventeenth century. Initial settlement in 1639 focused on the area around Washington Square and the waterfront to the south. Due in part to the lack of a single religious-political organizing force, the town's streets grew organically in response to convenience, topography, and land grant boundaries rather than a formalized plan. Over the next half century, a wide swath covering the land between present-day Broadway and West Broadway and between Marlborough Street and Washington Square was set aside as the "Great Common." Its northwest edge followed a stream that ran along West Broadway and Marlborough Street to the vicinity of the first wharf, Marlborough Wharf. At the east end of the Common was the town spring at the base of Griffin (now Touro) Street leading up the hill to Jews Street (now Bellevue Avenue). The primary north-south streets are Thames Street along the water edge and Spring Street to the east.

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By 1680, the town had over 400 houses, and the compact part covered at least a mile in length by 1712, with ongoing wharf construction along the shore edge outside the district. Construction of merchants', artisans', and craftsmen's houses and wharves on Easton's Point occurred in the first half of the eighteenth century following a more regular grid plan of streets and house lots. This basic framework of the town plan, begun by 1640, was in place by 1758 as recorded in a detailed manuscript map drawn by Rev. Ezra Stiles (original at Redwood Library; reproduced in Downing and Scully, 2nd ed., 1967, p. 34). It structured the town's growth for approximately 350 years, and its limits help to define the boundaries of the Newport Historic District National Historic Landmark.

Houses of the initial settlement period were similar to other Rhode Island and New England seventeenth-century dwellings: modest-scale, blocky, wood structures with gable roofs, large chimneys, and small windows. The form derived from English precedents. Approximately ten seventeenth-century houses survive in Newport, and they are valuable records of early building traditions, although all were altered and expanded by later additions. The most important seventeenth-century buildings in the district, however, are two non-domestic structures. The earliest known structure in the district is the Stone Mill (1673-77) located in Touro Park on Bellevue Avenue, a circular building of local stone with an arcaded ground story. The elongated, wood-frame Quaker Meeting House (1700, later enlarged) on Marlborough Street incorporates a rare example of a square, hip-roof, turreted meetinghouse, the framing of which is visible on the interior.

Newport's appearance as a colonial city coalesced in the first three quarters of the eighteenth century. By the beginning of the Revolutionary War, there were 1,100 buildings including modest seamen's, craftsmen's, and laborers' houses, stylish merchants' houses, commercial buildings, religious edifices, public buildings, and wharves. The buildings of this period reflect general stylistic shifts from medieval to Georgian aesthetics and the early beginnings of formalized, classically derived architecture and the use of published design sources. This is true primarily of the prominent buildings, but is also evident in the smaller, plainer dwellings. In addition to the remarkably high survival rate of colonial buildings, considerable scholarly information has been compiled on buildings that have been lost, providing a broader understanding of Newport's architectural heritage.

The Quaker Meeting House is the earliest of a group of nine early and very fine public buildings, six of which were constructed between 1729 and 1763. The simple wood-frame Sabbatarian Meeting House (1729, moved 1884 and attached to rear of Newport Historical Society), the wood-frame Trinity Church (1735, extended 1762; NHL, 1968) inspired by Christopher Wren, and the prominent brick-and-freestone-trimmed Colony House [Old State House] (1739; NHL, 1960) at the head of Washington Square were connected with Richard Munday, a builder-architect working before 1740. Some ten to twenty years later, Peter Harrison, one of the colonies' first and most accomplished architects, designed three important buildings derived from Palladian ideals articulated in English books in his extensive personal library: the wood-frame Redwood Library (1748; NHL, 1960), the arcaded Brick Market (1760-1772; NHL, 1960), and the brick Touro Synagogue (1763; individual National Historic Site).

The Colony House and Brick Market occupy opposite ends of Washington Square (previously known as the Parade or Mall), helping define Newport's finest early urban open space. The diminutive Liberty Park at Farewell and Marlborough Streets near the Quaker Meeting House is also a remnant of the early Great Common and was set aside as public space before 1729. Beginning in the 1660s, Newporters buried their dead in the

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Common Burying Ground at the north end of the district. Other burying grounds within the district established during this period include the seventeenth-century Friends Cemetery, Edward Street, and Coddington Burial Ground, Farewell Street (between 1678 and 1700).

The many fine mansions and small houses remaining from the pre-Revolutionary period line the narrow streets of the Point and the Hill overlooking the harbor which was edged with wharves and warehouses. These houses range in form from half-houses to full, five-bay center-chimney dwellings, with gable, gambrel, or gable-on-hip roofs, and are often set end to the street, reflecting limited land availability. The doorways of more modest houses are typically flat, occasionally with transoms, while the treatment of more substantial houses includes a variety of triangular and segmental pedimented surrounds. The expansion of initially small houses into larger ones commonly occurred, as did the addition of pedimented doorways and trim. Many houses have well preserved floor plans and finely crafted interior finishes, often the work of local artisans.

Modest vernacular buildings comprise a large portion of the district's fabric. Examples of the diminutive gambrel roof cottage, 1 1/2-stories tall and usually one room deep, survive at Jonathan Gibbs House (181 Spring Street, 1771), built by Gibbs, a housewright; the Joseph Belcher House (36 Walnut Street, 1760-70), home of a pewterer; and the James Gardner House (23 Bridge Street, ca 1750). Larger versions, but still one-story, are the Dyer House and Shop (58 Poplar Street, shop ca 1740, house between 1758 and 1776); the Huntington-Crandall House (59 Poplar Street, before 1758); and the Lucina Langley House (43 Pelham Street, before 1771). Another type of simpler house form is the gable-roof, 2 1/2-story half-house illustrated by the Governor Gideon Wanton House (11 Cross Street, ca 1725) and the Cornell Gideon House (3 Division Street, between 1730 and 1758). The 2 1/2-story gambrel-roof dwellings set end to the street are represented by dwellings such as the Dr. Samuel Hopkins House (46 Division Street, between 1758 and 1772) and the Capt. William Finch House (78 Washington Street, ca 1770). The use of brick end walls sometimes occurred, as in the gambrel-roof Caleb Claggett House (22 Bridge Street, ca 1725). Double houses appear to have been rare, although at least one survives, the gambrel-roof Cozzens House (57-59 Farewell Street, ca 1765).

Few commercial and industrial buildings remain from this period, but among them is the John Stevens Shop (29 Thames Street, ca 1757), an unassuming, 2-story, gable-roof structure built as a stonemason's shop. The Point section contains a group of houses and shops built by notable woodworkers of the Townsend family including the Christopher Townsend House and Shop (74 Bridge Street, ca 1725) and the John Townsend House and Workshop (70-72 Bridge Street, ca 1750). Several early taverns characteristic of the larger period houses also survive, including the gambrel-roof Pitts Head Tavern (77 Bridge Street, ca 1726, moved to present site from Washington Square); the square, gable-on-hip-roof Kings Arms Tavern (6 Cross Street, ca 1713); and the gambrel-roof White Horse Tavern (16 Farewell Street, before 1693, enlarged 18th century).

The houses of wealthy colonial merchants and traders are concentrated near the waterfront on Washington Street (formerly Water Street) in the Point and along the east side of Thames Street, as well as on the Hill overlooking the harbor. Two are preserved as museum houses. The Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House (17 Broadway, ca 1695, NHL, 1960) is probably the oldest standing dwelling in Newport and embodies seventeenth-century framing techniques along with eighteenth-century Georgian modifications and ornamentation. The steeply pitched, kicked out roof, and coved plaster cornice are echoed in a simpler form on the Rhoades-Pease-King House (32 Clarke Street, ca 1700). The Hunter House (54 Washington Street, before 1758, NHL, 1968) is a fine gambrel-roof mansion noted for its elegant proportions, elaborate entrance, and exquisite interior which contains a large collection of Townsend and Goddard furniture.

The gambrel roof form remained popular for many substantial 2 1/2-story houses constructed with 5-bay facades, two interior chimneys, and a pedimented center entry, or expanded to this form. Buildings

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representative of this group include the John Bannister House (56 Pelham Street, ca 1751), which possesses a recessed entrance; the Ezra Stiles House (14 Clarke Street, ca 1756) where Stiles maintained a garden described in his writings; the Captain John Warren House (62 Washington Street, before 1758, enlarged late 18th century); and the Thomas Robinson House (64 Washington Street, before 1736, enlarged late 18th century). The Rathbun-Gardner-Rivera House, now Newport National Bank, (8 Washington Square, before 1722, enlarged 18th century) has served as a bank since 1804.

The Vernon House (46 Clarke Street, ca 1708, enlarged ca 1760, NHL, 1968) illustrates the transformation of early cottages into mansions. The early dwelling is enveloped within an elegant Georgian mansion with rusticated wood sheathing sanded to appear as ashlar masonry, a wide classical doorway, modillion and dentil cornice, and a low hip roof with a balustraded deck. A similar wall treatment is found on the 3-story Buliod-Perry House (29 Touro Street, prior to 1755) along with a low hip roof and classically-inspired detailing. The Francis Malbone House (392 Thames, 1758), the last remaining of the fashionable Colonial merchants' houses built on Thames Street, is notable as a 3-story, low-hip-roof, brick house with flanking end-gable appendages and Ionic pedimented entrances. One of the best remaining examples of a gable-on-hip roof house in this mode is the Bull-Mawdsley House (228 Spring Street, 1680, later enlarged). Building construction halted in Newport during the Revolutionary War and British occupation of the town from 1776 to 1780. In fact, approximately 400 houses were destroyed for firewood and other uses.

As a result of this devastating period and Newport's slow recovery following the war, the colonial legacy that survives is decidedly distinct from subsequent building phases. In addition, throughout the nineteenth century, the established street patterns of the town changed little, and new construction opportunities were restricted simply by virtue of limited available land. The town, however, was gradually rebuilt, and during the first decades of the nineteenth century vacant lots were filled in with one church, several fine Federal style mansions, and new smaller houses, and the Parade at Washington Square was landscaped. St. Paul's Methodist Church, Marlborough Street (1806), is a restrained wood-frame, 2-story, end-gable structure incorporating a multi-stage tower within the main mass. The most elegant of the new houses were three stories in height, of wood or brick, with hipped roofs, segmental and ocular windows, pedimented doorways, leaded fanlights, and delicate ornamentation drawn increasingly from English pattern books. They include the wood-frame Joseph and Robert Rogers House, 35-7 Touro Street (1790), the brick Robert Lawton House, 118 Mill Street (ca 1809), and the brick Samuel Whitehorne House, 414-418 Thames Street (1811), the last big house erected on Thames Street. Simpler 2-story houses with flank gable roofs, 5-bay facades, and a focal center entrance include the Daniel Vaughn House, 44 Pelham Street (between 1795 and 1813) and the John Langley House, 28 Church (ca 1807).

Little if any new construction occurred in the town between 1818 and 1828, but building activity picked up in the 1830s with the town's increasing role as a summer resort. By this time the Greek Revival style was well developed and was the choice for fashionable 2-story, wood-frame houses such as the Van Zandt House, 70 Pelham Street (1836) with its monumental temple front. The Levi Gale House, 85 Touro Street (1834) is another good example. Moved from the head of Washington Square, it is a square, flat-roof structure with a center entrance portico and a 5-bay facade divided by composite pilasters. The tradition of fine craftsmanship and design continued; the former was built by John Ladd, and the latter was designed by Russell Warren.

Other less elaborate dwellings with pedimented end gable roofs, paneled pilasters and Greek Revival details included the William Crandall House, 63 Poplar Street (1833) and the Charles Sherman House, 128 Mill Street (between 1825 and 1850). Also dating from this period is the Newport Artillery Company Headquarters, 23 Clarke Street (1835), an end-gable stone building erected by Alexander McGregor, the Scottish stonemason responsible for Fort Adams (1824, NHL, 1987), located at the south entrance to Newport Harbor outside the

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district. Several churches were also constructed during this period including Saint Mary's Church, 250 Spring Street (1848-52), the First Baptist Church, 30 Spring Street (1846), and the Old African Methodist Episcopal Church, 3 Johnson Court (ca 1857).

Toward the middle of the nineteenth century, Newport's taste shifted in favor of the picturesque and romantic in residential design and dictated the kinds of buildings erected into the early twentieth century. A few fully articulated expressions of period styles occur in houses built for wealthy residents. The majority, however, are more modest endeavors showing influences of current design preferences in the use of elements such as L-plans, lively ornamentation, grouped and arched windows, and porches. The early Victorian houses include examples with a variety of cross gable roofs and sawn ornamental trim, such as the semi-Gothic *cottage ornee*, the D. Turner House, 10 School Street (before 1850), and the William W. Marvel Cottage, 6 Pope Street (ca 1870), a simple house with gable roof, open porch, and elaborate pierced and curved bargeboards and porch trim. Bracketed Italianate buildings, often with mansard roofs, a heavier looking type based in masonry precedents, began to appear in the 1850s. They include the 1 1/2-story Philip Rider House, 80 Pelham Street (between 1860 and 1876), the 2 1/2-story Crandall House, 57 Poplar Street (ca 1854), the William S. Cranston Houses, 343 and 345 Spring Street (ca 1870), and the Charles H. Burdick House, 353 Spring Street (ca 1855). The 3-story Butler House (92 & 94 Pelham Street, ca 1865) depicts the in-town Italianate villa with a flat roof and overhanging cornice on the end tower section.

The larger houses constructed in the town center after the Civil War tended to cluster along the edges of Bellevue Avenue adjacent to the newly fashionable residential neighborhoods to the east and southeast of the district and on Washington Street near the water. The Stick Style is exemplified in the district by the Sanford-Covell House (72 Washington Street, 1869-70), while the two large Sarah Kendall Houses across the street (47 & 49 Washington Street, between 1860 and 1876, and 1865) exhibit eclectic Queen Anne elements such as sunbonnet gables and turrets. The William H. Smith House and Office (135-137 Pelham Street, 1878-79) and Parkgate (141 Pelham Street, between 1879 and 81), are rambling Victorian houses with multiple gables, hipped turrets, textured shingles, and irregular massing. The small Stick Style Samuel Pratt House (49 Bellevue Avenue, 1871) is distinguished by its colored slate sheathing and elaborate trim. It has been attributed to Richard Morris Hunt. Few Shingle Style houses were erected, but the J. W. Bigelow Stable (79 Second Street, between 1876 and 1883) survives from an estate designed by McKim, Mead & White.

The eclectic Queen Anne style was employed for many of the smaller infill houses built during the last few decades of the nineteenth century, exemplified by the Mary C. Ailman House (50 Second Street, between 1883 and 1893) with its end-gable roof, turned-post porch, spindle work, and tinted ribbon windows. Other examples are the Hannah Lynch House (182 Spring Street, 1899) and the Hyde House (87 Spring Street, 1898) which combines clapboard and shingle sheathing with a bow window and low window and door pediments with carved undulating ornament. Butted against its eighteenth-century neighbor to the south, it also illustrates the perpetual scarcity of building lots. The Queen Anne red and buff brick John Radford House (63-65 Mill Street, at the corner of Spring Street, 1895) has two bow windows on Spring Street.

Augmentation of the main commercial spines of Thames Street and Broadway with 2- and 3-story brick commercial blocks attests to the need for provisions and services for Newport's summer resort and seaport economy and an expanding U. S. Navy presence in the town. While first floors have been altered, the massing and upper stories of many surviving eclectic Late Victorian buildings are well preserved. Examples include the W. Sherman Building (138-142 Thames Street, 1890s), D. W. Sheehan Building (250 Thames Street, 1894), Kinsley Building (286 Thames Street, 1892), and George A. Weaver Building (19-23 Broadway, 1892). Spring Street developed as a secondary commercial thoroughfare in the nineteenth century and retains excellent rows

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of small shops interspersed among the residential buildings. Purpose-built shops, sometimes combined with upper story residential use include the brick-and-granite-trimmed 3-story block of the R. S. and W. B. Franklin Bakery (105-107 Spring Street, 1876), ornamented with a wheat sheaf on the date stone; 135-137 Spring Street (between 1893 and 1907); and the Theo R. Helme Building (148-160 Thames Street, between 1859 and 1876). Storefronts were also added to existing wood-frame houses, of which the Abigail Cahoon House (104-106 Spring Street, before 1777) and the Borden House (134 & 136 Spring Street, before 1758) are representative. Small neighborhood shops, such as the 1-story, wood-frame William F. Tripp Market (83 Third Street, between 1893 and 1907) were also scattered throughout the district.

Churches, schools, and fire houses of brick, brownstone, and granite provided public services and places of worship for town center residents: The Renaissance Revival Callendar School (11 Willow Street, 1862), the brick-and-shingle Steam Fire Company #1 (25 Mill Street, 1886), the brick-and-granite Fire Station #2 (16 Young Street, 1877), and the brownstone Gothic Revival St. John the Evangelist Church (61 Washington Street, 1894). Other improvements at the turn of the century focused on the creation and enhancement of open space as parks and for recreation. Touro Park was re-landscaped; the Olmsted Brothers firm was engaged for new layout and planting at Washington Square; and Ellery Park was created in 1919. The baseball diamond and bleachers at Cardine's Field (West Marlborough Street) were also constructed in 1919.

The era of prosperity continued into the twentieth century, but opportunities for new construction were severely restricted by the town's dense urban fabric, and long term effects of the Depression were evident in the 1920s and 1930s. A few Colonial Revival style houses, plain end-gable houses, and bungalows were tucked into the existing Point neighborhood. The major buildings from the first four decades of the twentieth century are masonry commercial, institutional, and civic buildings: Mary Street YMCA (41 Mary Street, 1893, 1907); the Beaux Arts Army and Navy YMCA (Washington Square, 1911, individual NR); the Cutting Memorial Chapel (301 Spring Street, 1916); the brick Georgian Revival Newport County Courthouse (Washington Square, 1926); the classically detailed, brick-and-buff-terra cotta Telephone Building (142-146 Spring Street, 1925); and Savings Bank of Newport (10 Washington Square, 1929).

By mid-century, the effects of Newport's slackened economy were undeniable; new construction essentially halted and existing buildings suffered from reduced maintenance. The lull's positive impact was in encapsulating the old town as it appeared in the first decades of the twentieth century. From the 1950s through the 1980s, while urban renewal programs decimated the historic building fabric along the waterfront, public and private restoration efforts saved and revitalized hundreds of buildings within the district. Today the Newport Historic District is an extraordinarily well-preserved area that retains the physical record of all periods of its development with remarkably few modern intrusions. Of the approximately 1,300 total buildings within the district, nearly one-quarter were built before 1825, one-quarter between 1825 and 1870, and the majority of the remaining half between 1870 and 1920.

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8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

Nationally: X Statewide: __ Locally: __

Applicable National

Register Criteria: A x B__ C x D

Criteria Considerations

(Exceptions): A__ B__ C__ D__ E__ F__ G

NHL Criteria: 1 and 4

NHL Exceptions: 1, 2, and 5

NHL Theme(s): III. Expressing Cultural Values

5. architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design

I. Peopling Places

4. community and neighborhood

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Community Planning and Development

Period(s) of Significance: 1636-1944

Significant Dates:

Significant Person(s):

Cultural Affiliation:

Architect/Builder:

Historic Contexts:

XVI. Architecture

A. Colonial

B. Georgian

C. Federal

D. Greek Revival

E. Gothic Revival

G. Renaissance Revival

I. Italian Villa

I. Second Empire

J. Stick Style

K. Queen Anne

M. Period Revivals

1. Georgian

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5. Neo-Classical

6. Beaux Arts

V. Historic District

W. Regional and Urban Planning

1. Urban Areas

X. Vernacular Architecture

XXX. American Ways of Life

D. Urban Life

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Newport Historic District (designated a National Historic Landmark in 1968) possesses extraordinary significance for its nationally important colonial architectural heritage, including both outstanding individual examples of Georgian design and a significant concentration of smaller modest houses. One of English colonial America's great seaport cities, Newport also retains a singular collection of buildings from its first two centuries. The circumstances of the city's later development have preserved the core of the colonial city. The district's buildings are a laboratory of colonial architecture and the interrelationship between vernacular and academic architecture. The artistic design and craftsmanship traditions include not only the works of notable builders and architects, but also the houses and shops of illustrious furniture makers and other artisans. Valuable physical evidence of Newport's first period of exploration and settlement is preserved in buildings, street plan, and open spaces—in their exceptional number, density, and state of preservation, the district's historic resources portray the life of a colonial city.

The district is significant not only for its seventeenth- and eighteenth-century architectural legacy, but also for its nineteenth- and early twentieth-century buildings and intact neighborhoods and streetscapes—they chronicle the forces which shaped the city during its historic period from 1639 to the 1940s. Over the full course of Newport's progression from an agricultural and maritime settlement to a colonial seaport, an industrial and military center, and finally a summer resort, influential individuals, ideas, and events are embodied in the physical fabric of this district. Together, they form a highly distinctive entity, exceptional in its quality and character.

The history of the town's development in the areas of commerce, maritime history, politics/government, community planning and development, landscape architecture, religion, and social history are captured within the district. Residents of the district, which is both the historic and present-day center of Newport, included noteworthy statesmen, scholars, artisans, and merchants. In the early twentieth century, economic decline was accompanied by pioneering interests in historic preservation, the foundation of the district's intact existence today.

The period of significance for the district begins in 1639 when the town was settled and ends in 1944. During this long period Newport experienced two distinct and vigorous periods of growth and prosperity: from about 1680 to 1774 as a leading colonial seaport, and from about 1840 to the mid-1940s as a premier fashionable summer resort.

The district was largely built-out by the mid-1920s when Rhode Island and Newport entered a recessionary prelude to the Great Depression, and few buildings were constructed during the 1930s and early 1940s. Despite the moribund development of these latter decades of the period of significance, several very important institutions and civic organizations built new quarters during this period, including the Bank of Newport, the Christian Science Church, and the Odd Fellows. Several of these buildings are architecturally significant, reflecting in their modes the earlier buildings of Newport and suggesting the persistence of classical ideals in the architecture of the city. The end date of the period of significance is the date of construction for the last of these civic and institutional buildings—the USO Building, at 28 West Broadway. Built by the Federal Works Administration as a recreational center for African-American sailors and soldiers stationed in Newport, the building is architecturally unprepossessing but nevertheless important in the history of Newport—it continues

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the important theme of recreation as an aspect of Newport's history.

This nomination presents a boundary expansion for the district to include the Common Burying-Ground which was begun in 1640. This cemetery is a significant part of the story of the early years of Newport, and it presents the nation's social and artistic development in microcosm. As a resting place for everyman and anyman, the Common Burying-Ground reflects Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, concept of brotherhood.

The nomination also provides additional and updated documentation for the district including a more complete survey of all of the resources in the district and whether they contribute or not to the national significance than the original 1968 documentation.

HISTORY

Newport was founded in May, 1639, by colonists from Massachusetts Bay via Portsmouth, led by John Clarke, William Brenton, William Coddington, and the Eastons. Cultured, wealthy, with high political and social standing in England and the colonies, these settlers explicitly embraced religious freedom, tolerance, and separation of church and state. Language to that effect appeared in the statutes drawn up in 1640, and John Clarke is credited with drafting similar text for Rhode Island's colonial Charter of 1663. This liberal outlook set Newport (like Providence which was founded on religious freedom in 1636) apart from more conservative New England towns, both in the people it attracted and the favorable climate for commerce it created.

The colonists drawn to Newport were initially Baptists, rather than the dominant New England Puritans. By the mid-eighteenth century they were joined by others drawn by the town's tolerance, especially Quakers and Jews, along with smaller numbers of Episcopalians, Congregationalists, and Moravians. The Society of Friends flourished in Newport. Quakers dominated trade and politics into the mid-eighteenth century, and the town's diverse religious identity was a significant factor in the development patterns of commercial associations, family relations, government, and physical plan.

By 1680, Newport had emerged as a thriving seaport of over 400 houses, arranged around a still-legible, irregular town plan of streets along the harbor and the hill. With no established church and thus no central architectural focus determined by church and government buildings, the town grew in response to topography, location of waterfront commercial areas, and property boundaries. Early agriculture within the town center quickly gave way to commerce and pressure for house lots, reflected in the sale of the Quaker Easton family's lands on the Point in 1711.

Construction of wharves was simultaneous with building the first houses, and by 1680 Newport merchants had formed The Proprietors of the Long Wharf to promote shipping. With Boston, Newport led the colonies in shipbuilding. Early industries supporting the agricultural/maritime economy included grist and saw mills, tanneries, cooperages, breweries, and bakeries. The town supported shipwrights and housewrights, blacksmiths, masons, cordwainers, mechanics, shopkeepers, silversmiths, and artisans. Benedict Arnold's Stone Mill from the 1870s is the oldest and sole surviving agricultural/industrial structure in the district, and its form is unique in the country.

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Although all of Newport's extant seventeenth-century buildings were modified in later years, enough structural fabric survives to provide valuable documentation of vernacular English medieval domestic building traditions transported to the colonies and adapted to a combination of heavy timber frames and massive masonry chimneys. At least five truly vernacular buildings remain, with at least ten seventeenth-century buildings. The most notable is the Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House (17 Broadway, 1695, NHL, 1960).

Few public buildings were erected in Newport until the last two decades of the century. The first Colony House was built in 1687, as well as eight or nine churches which have all been torn down. The earliest surviving public building, the simple Quaker Meeting House erected in 1699 on Marlborough Street, reveals an unusually rare example of an early hip-roof and turreted meetinghouse. Its austerity reflects the Quaker belief in the "plain," and it stands in strong contrast to the exuberance of the extant early eighteenth-century public buildings.

By the mid-eighteenth century, Newport was at the height of its prosperity and ranked among the leading colonial ports, alongside Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Charleston. Despite war and British trade restrictions, it was a bustling free port, engaged in profitable trade with the Caribbean, Atlantic seaboard towns, England, and Portugal. Almost all the 120 Newport-owned vessels that sailed these routes were built in the town. Lumber from Honduras, salt from the Mediterranean, molasses and sugar from the West Indies, as well as hemp, fish, flour, rice, flaxseed, and whale oil were all carried on Newport vessels.

Many merchants also participated in the triangular trade and directly in the slave trade. Newport merchants also participated in the Rhode Island plantation system prevalent on Aquidnick Island and the Rhode Island mainland to the west, an agricultural pattern which relied on slave labor and large country estates. Throughout its colonial period Newport had a substantial African-American community, perhaps a tenth of the city's population. Many blacks who came to Newport—slave, free, and indentured-- were born in West Indies, and many were highly skilled craftsmen.

The spectrum of trading exhibited some broad distinctions along religious lines, with Quakers involved in West Indies commerce and Jewish merchants particularly promoting whale oil and spermaceti candle making. However, fluidity tied to the most profitable or consistent trade categories was more the rule, and the vigor of involvement was universal, whether by Abraham Redwood or Aaron Lopez, Newport's wealthiest Quaker and Portuguese Jew.

Newport's expansive religious principles, aggressive mercantile character, and cosmopolitan social life were derided in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by prominent Massachusetts clergymen, London officials, and others as extremist and dangerous. In fact, most Newporters were political and religious moderates concerned with pursuing the main chance. Some traders verged on piracy, and some were deeply involved in the slave trade, but most were more commonplace.

In the eighteenth century, Newport became an intellectual and cultural center. Music, art, publishing, and medical science flourished. Newport is the site of one of the colonies' first public libraries, the Redwood (NHL, 1960), located in the original building designed by Peter Harrison, its colonial book collection largely intact. The Franklin Press, founded in 1729, was one of the earliest in America. In 1758, the *Newport Mercury* newspaper began publication. The lively cultural life of Newport is documented in the furniture, silver, paintings, and clocks produced by its artists and artisans, and in the records, correspondence, accounts, and printed materials which document the identities and accomplishments of the town's carpenters, masons, wrights, and smiths. But above all else, it is the district's buildings that testify to the vitality of this colonial city.

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The written record also provides strong evidence of the town residents' interest in horticulture and garden design, including cultivation of imported plants and construction of hot houses, summerhouses, and other garden structures. Despite the inherently ephemeral nature of historic landscapes, some important evidence of the very earliest designed landscapes survives. Abraham Redwood's octagonal garden house, now on the grounds of the Redwood Library, the Clarke Street garden site of Rev. Ezra Stiles's early silkworm cultivation, burying grounds, and open spaces of the "Great Common", are important records of colonial garden and open space design.

By far the most important of the first-century landscapes is the Common Burying Ground, a graveyard occupying a 12-acre site at the north end of the district, overlooking the Point and Narragansett Bay. Established officially in 1681, the Common Burying Ground was used even earlier—some stones date to the 1660s. There are over 4500 gravestones in the graveyard, and they are an unparalleled resource, both in terms of their artistic merit and the information they contain about an early city. Many stones were carved by artisans of singular merit. They contain substantial genealogical information, and the burial practices and funerary symbols they depict are significant. Further, these stones reflect important aspects of Newport's early history—the economic success of its maritime economy, its religious toleration, and the presence here of a substantial African-American community. There is a collection of over fifty 17th-century markers, a few of which may have been imported directly from England, but many of which appear to be in the style of noted Boston carver William Mumford. The work of carver John Stevens, along with markers made by his descendants, dominates the graveyard into the 19th century. Stevens emigrated from England and established his house and shop close to the Common Burying Ground in 1705.

The northernmost section of the Common Burying Ground is perhaps the most significant section—designated for “outsiders,” the stones in this section mark the graves of non-resident military personnel, an early Greek community, and other considered beyond the limits of the dominant culture. The great majority of the “outsiders” are African-Americans, and in fact the Common Burying Ground has the largest collection of funerary markers for a colonial black community in the United States. The imagery, placement, and texts of these stones are a significant resource for the study of this community, both its own definitions of identity and its relationship to the larger culture. Of special note are two rare markers from the 1760s, carved by Pompey Stevens (the slave name of Zingo Stevens)—they are the rarest of artifacts, signed work from a colonial-era African-American artisan.

Newport possesses perhaps the densest concentration of colonial buildings of any city in the country. Some are of transcendent individual significance in the development of American architecture. Some are distinctively designed and crafted illustrations of their type and period. The majority, however, are vernacular and simple renditions of domestic building. Taken in sum, their value lies in their sheer numbers and cohesiveness, within which variety abounds. They chart both the transformation of Newport from a seventeenth-century town to a prominent colonial seaport and the progression of American architecture from traditional folk building ways performed by carpenters to the most sophisticated period designs produced by expert architect-builders and the country's first true architects. The flowering of talent, patronage, and wealth is remarkably well documented in the district.

The local architect-builder, Richard Munday's Trinity Church of 1726 (NHL, 1968), closely allied to ecclesiastical designs by the English architect Christopher Wren, and his Colony House of 1739 [Old State House] (NHL, 1960) signal the emergence of self-conscious design in public buildings. Munday was also responsible for other Newport buildings, including two Malbone houses, now gone. Further, the district

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includes three great commissions from one of the nation's first and most accomplished architects, Peter Harrison-- Redwood Library (1748), Touro Synagogue (1763), and the Brick Market (1760-72) (NHL, 1960). Designed by the nation's first interpreter of Palladio, they document the introduction of classical design and the use of academic published reference sources and illustrate Harrison's skill in transforming the flat drawings into three-dimensional works of art.

Credit for these beautifully mature evocations of the architect's art belongs in part to the vision of the leaders of Newport, such as Henry Collins, Abraham Redwood, Peter Bours, Dean George Berkeley, and Isaac Touro, and influential organizations: the Trinity Church and Colony House building committees, the Proprietors of Long Wharf who arranged for construction of Market House, the Philosophical Society and founders of Redwood Library, and the members of Touro Synagogue. Their legacy includes one of the few remaining unaltered colonial church spires, a transitional and original statehouse design, the first temple-front public building in the colonies, the oldest synagogue standing in the United States, and a handsome market building squarely within the current English academic taste.

In 1761, Newport had 888 dwelling and 439 warehouses and stores. Fully two-third of the dwellings in the Point section alone were two-stories in height. Colonial merchants built elegant houses with broad gambrel roofs and broken and scroll pediments in Richard Munday's time before 1750. After mid-century, merchants' houses increasingly approached academic correctness with low hipped roofs, classic balustrades and doorways in designs likely influenced by Peter Harrison's buildings. A comparison of the Hunter House (54 Washington Street, before 1758, NHL, 1968) with the Francis Malbone House (392 Thames Street, 1758), Vernon House (46 Clarke Street, ca 1708, ca 1760, NHL, 1968), or the Bull-Mawdsley House (228 Spring Street, 1680, 1748) will suffice as illustration, although many other examples exist. Similar changes are evident in smaller houses, where the gambrel roof was gradually replaced by the gable form, running cornices supplanted cornices broken out around windows, and classically-inspired doorways appeared.

Craftsmen and artisans were strongly encouraged and respected in eighteenth-century Newport, and their output furnished many of the finer homes. Contributing to the town's aesthetic and economy by using local and imported raw materials to manufacture items for local and export sales, Newport craftsmen produced some of the best furniture, silver, pewter, and clocks on east coast. At least 99 cabinetmakers and 17 chair makers were working in the town.

The houses and shops of the Townsends and Goddards, whose furniture is still highly prized, are located in the Point section near the site of former wharves with direct access to shipping for export to the West Indies and Charlestown. At least fourteen members of the Townsend family engaged in furniture making. Christopher and Job Townsend lived and worked at 72 and 19 Bridge Street, and John Townsend's grandson, also a cabinetmaker, resided at 78 Bridge Street. The home of cabinetmakers John and Thomas Goddard at 81 Second Street originally stood on the corner of Washington and Willow Streets before being moved in late nineteenth century. William Claggett, maker of the clock located since 1731 in the Sabbatarian Meetinghouse, lived in the house at 16 Bridge Street. John Stevens's stone cutting shop, run by members of Stevens family since 1705 and most recently the sculpture studio of a Stevens descendent, remains at 29 Thames Street. William Hookey, goldsmith at 6 Coddington Street and Jonathan Otis, silversmith at 87 Spring Street, were two of at least eight fine metal workers. Still standing on Corne Street is the late-eighteenth-century barn purchased by Italian mural painter Michel Felice Corne in 1822 and converted to a dwelling. Among his commissions Corne painted the Hancock House in Boston, a Derby house in Salem, and extant murals in the Sullivan Dorr House (College Hill NHL District), Providence. He is best known for his Great Lakes scenes, and fragments of murals that decorated his own house are in the Newport Historical Society collections. Other painters associated with Newport include Gilbert Stuart, Robert Feke, and John Smibert.

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Of the colonial taverns, White Horse Tavern begun in 1673 has the distinction of holding the oldest tavern license in the country. Pitts Head Tavern was owned by Henry Collins, son of silversmith Arnold Collins, and a notable patron of letters and the arts. Dr. Hopkins, pastor of the First Congregational Church and hero of Harriet Beecher Stowe's The Minister Wooing; Christopher Ellery; and Isaac Touro, the rabbi for whom the synagogue was named, all lived in houses still standing on Division Street. William Ellery Channing lived in the house at the southeast corner of School and Mary Streets. The Rev. Ezra Stiles, scholar, pastor of the Second Congregational Church, librarian of Newport's Redwood Library, and later president of Yale College, lived on Clarke Street.

The Peter Buliod House (29 Touro Street, c1760), formerly on the Touro Street side of Washington Square, became the home of the Rhode Island Bank, Newport's first bank in 1795. In 1818, it was bought by Oliver Hazard Perry, the hero of Lake Erie during the War of 1812. His brother, Matthew Calbraith Perry, who was instrumental in opening Japan to western trade, resided as a child at 31 Walnut Street.

Newport's colonial period prosperity was diminished by trade restrictions and then destroyed by the outbreak of the Revolutionary War. The bitterest Stamp Act riot occurred at the Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House (17 Broadway), then the home of Governor Richard Ward, and another took place in front of 40 Division Street, the residence of stampmaster Augustus Johnston.

The Declaration of Independence was read from Colony House balcony in 1776. Newport's key strategic location at the mouth of Narragansett Bay made it a prime target for the British. On December 8, 1776, the British Army under Gen. Henry Clinton occupied Newport, retaining possession until October 25, 1779. Soldiers were billeted in houses and churches and they scoured the town for firewood (destroying about 400 buildings) and food. Many Newporters, both Loyalists and colonists left, and the population dropped from 9,209 in 1774 to 5,229 by 1776. By 1784, it had declined even further to only 4000.

American troops reoccupied the town on October 26, 1779. The French Army arrived at Newport on July 10, 1780, and remained until June 1781. Gen. Rochambeau kept headquarters at the Vernon House on Clarke Street, and was visited here by George Washington. The senior French officers were billeted in houses throughout the town, including the Capt. John Warren House (62 Washington Street), headquarters for the Adm. de Ternay; and the Thomas Robinson House (64 Washington Street), headquarters of Vicomte de Noailles; and Bull-Mawdsley House, headquarters for the Marquis de Chastellux.

Attempts to revive the economy following the war met with only very limited success. Providence, located at the protected head of Narragansett Bay, had become the governmental center of Rhode Island during the war and now surpassed Newport as a shipping center. Newport's primacy as a port was never again as certain as it had been. Nevertheless, 21 ship captains lived on Bridge Street in 1800, and the merchant Samuel Whitehorne constructed a handsome Federal style house at 414-418 Thames Street in 1811. The third bank in the town, Newport Bank, opened its doors in 1803 at the Abraham Rivera House on Washington Square, which still houses the bank. The Embargo Acts of 1807 and 1809 and the War of 1812 limited maritime trade even further. From 1815 to 1828 Newport remained in a state of suspended animation with a stifled economy and almost no new construction. As a result of the devastation and inactivity of approximately thirty years Newport has few of the square Federal mansions which fill Providence and other parts of the national period, and its colonial character was preserved.

A few industries were also established on the waterfront just outside the district, but Newport had no natural

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waterpower, no industrial tradition, and a limited island hinterland, and thus did not develop a strong industrial economy. Instead the rejuvenation of the town's economy was based on an expansion of an earlier theme as a desirable place of summer residence. As early as the 1720s, West Indian and South Carolinian colonists had migrated north to Newport in the hot summer, and in the 1840s, Newport emerged as one of the country's preeminent resorts, initiating its second great period of prominence.

This relatively specialized role set Newport apart from the other coastal and increasingly industrialized towns of the eastern seaboard, having more in common with other resort communities such as the spas at Saratoga, New York, and later the mountainous Berkshires of western Massachusetts. The seasonal influx of well-to-do urban families from the south and major cities of New York, Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore infused the town with attributes of wealth, sophisticated taste, and community interests brought from other parts of the country. Newport's population overall increased from 8,000 in 1840 to 20,000 in 1885, accompanied by a construction boom of summer and year-round houses.

The major forces driving Newport's growth in this period occurred beyond the center of town. The U. S. Navy's presence on Goat and Coaster's Harbor Islands outside the district indirectly influenced the district's development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The Naval Academy had moved temporarily from Annapolis to Newport in 1861 during Civil War and arrived to stay in 1869. The U. S. Army also maintained a presence in Newport, based at Fort Adams. For soldiers and sailors, Newport's center was an off-base destination.

The decade of the 1840s coincided with the introduction of steamboat service, and later train service just outside the district. These transportation improvements contributed to the increased number of summer visitors and gradually also the number of day visitors. Both train and steamboat service continued into the twentieth century.

The most visually impressive and architecturally significant products of this period are the imposing summer houses on ample grounds erected for seasonal residents outside the district to the east, south, and southwest, along Bellevue Avenue and Ocean Drive. Yet, the district remained the heart and core of Newport, where commercial, governmental, and institutional activity supported development elsewhere. Shops, professional offices, services, banks, some government offices, and houses of worship were clustered within the old colonial town, particularly along Thames Street and Spring Street and at Washington Square. The residential streets housed owners and employees of these establishments, as well as people who worked on the waterfront and in the mansions. Several large hotels, constructed in the 1840s (no longer extant) accommodated summer visitors.

Some large houses were built on the Hill near Bellevue Avenue and the Point shoreline in up-to-date styles, and more modest houses filled in the side streets. The district contains Newport's greatest concentration of Greek Revival buildings ranging from the elaborate Gov. Van Zandt House (70 Pelham Street, 1836) to the restrained Charles Sherman House (128 Mill Street, between 1825 and 1850). Houses in the later nineteenth-century Italianate, Stick Style, and Queen Anne styles built for wealthy summer residents are also represented.

For the most part, however, the district neighborhoods were solidly working and middle class. The smaller houses were both single- and multi-family, simple and sturdy, and often with minimal ornamentation. The population expansion created a housing shortage for the working class in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Tenements, such as those constructed by William S. Cranston at 343 and 345 Spring Street and other speculative rental properties built by local investors helped alleviate the problem, although the congested urban neighborhoods of the town center had little land for new buildings.

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By the third quarter of the nineteenth century, civic improvements were undertaken by the city and by wealthy philanthropists, including the erection of fire stations, Cutting Memorial Chapel, and the Mary Street YMCA. The convergence of the wealthy summer residents, the military, and town needs is illustrated in the Army and Navy YMCA of 1911. Given by a noted Cincinnati philanthropist in honor of her two sons and designed by a New York architect, the large building prominently located on Washington Square served as a haven for soldiers on leave. Washington Square retained its key governmental role, which had diminished when City Hall was moved to Broadway, with the erection of Newport County Court House in 1926. Newport's center fell into decline in the 1940s as the town's economy stalled, the nineteenth-century building boom ended, the waterfront mills closed, seaport activity halted, and summer attendance and lavishness dwindled.

The mid-twentieth century found the district well preserved but unfashionable and, in some neighborhoods, shabby. But the resource, a nationally significant intact group of hundreds of colonial buildings—simple and sophisticated, vernacular and high-style—remained in place. Through a particular set of historical circumstances, Newport's center has been preserved far better than most colonial towns. The economic slump following the Revolution meant that new buildings did not replace the old in substantial numbers. With only a small industrial base throughout the nineteenth century, Newport's early houses were not replaced by new buildings needed for factory workers. And Newport has never suffered the kind of catastrophic fires that appear so often in the history of other densely-developed, mainly wooden cities.

In the decades since mid-century, the Newport Historic District has again become a center of interest—this time for the quality and number of its historic buildings. They have attracted and inspired new residents in Newport who have spent care and attention on the restoration and rehabilitation of the district's neighborhoods. An as-yet-incomplete chapter in the history of the district, the role of the preservation movement here in Newport will no doubt come to be seen as critical in the development of preservation philosophy and activity.

Newport's colonial houses began to receive attention as artifacts of the nation's history around the nation's centennial celebration in 1876. The rich assemblage offered numerous design sources for the emerging Colonial Revival style, and the district's houses played a part in its development. Charles F. McKim undertook one of the earliest restorations in 1872 at the Thomas Robinson House (64 Washington Street), where he installed artfully quaint if not academically correct, "colonial" style woodwork. In 1876, he remodeled the interior of the Dennis House, now St. John's Rectory, enlarging the rear room and moving the stair to create a large living hall with Colonial Revival details.

In the twentieth century, principles of restoration shifted to a more conservative and accurate approach. Architect Norman Isham set the standard for early historic preservation in Rhode Island and led the initial restoration efforts in several projects including Trinity Church and the Colony House in the 1910s, 20s, and 30s. In 1884, the Newport Historical Society purchased the Seventh-Day Baptist Meetinghouse and moved it to Touro Street, preserving one of the district's great treasures. In the 1920s, the society acquired and restored the Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House and the Friends Meetinghouse. In the post-World War II decades, even as redevelopment activities reshaped parts of Newport just outside the district, several organizations were active in the preservation of substantial numbers of historic buildings, including Operation Clapboard and the Newport Restoration Foundation.

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CONCLUSION

Newport, Rhode Island provides a unique architectural heritage in the many colonial structures which have survived. In addition to the great numbers of smaller, more modest houses, mansions of the wealthy merchants illustrate the prosperity which flourished in the years prior to the Revolution. Buildings designed by Richard Munday, a noted local master carpenter and by Peter Harrison, perhaps the most distinguished and best qualified of the colonial architects, gave Newport's Georgian public buildings a high rank among the most advanced and academic in style of those built in the colonies during the eighteenth century. In addition to the many outstanding individual examples of Georgian design, scores of smaller dwellings line the streets of the old town. In mass, scale, and texture, the physical evidence of Newport places it as near to the eighteenth century as to the twenty-first.

The district is significant not only for its seventeenth- and eighteenth-century architectural legacy, but also for its nineteenth- and early twentieth-century buildings and intact neighborhoods and streetscapes—they chronicle the forces which shaped the city during its historic period from 1639 to the 1940s. The history of the town's development in the areas of commerce, maritime history, politics/government, community planning and development, landscape architecture, religion, and social history are captured within the district. In the early twentieth century, economic decline was accompanied by pioneering interests in historic preservation, the foundation of the district's intact existence today.

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Lucas-Johnston House, NR, 1971.

Kay-Catherine-Old Beach Road Historic District, NR, 1973.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
 Previously Listed in the National Register.
 Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
 Designated a National Historic Landmark.
 Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
 Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State Agency
 Federal Agency (National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service)
 Local Government
 University
 Other (Specify Repository):

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: c. 260 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A.	19	307000	4596590
B.	19	307360	4594490
C.	19	306160	4594460
D.	19	306120	4596520

Verbal Boundary Description:

The Newport Historic District is a roughly L-shaped area along the north and east sides of Newport Harbor. Numbers given in this description are Newport Assessor's plats and lots, to be read as "plat number/lot number."

Van Zandt Avenue to Broadway:

Beginning at the northwest corner of the district, at the NW corner of 9/352, the boundary follows east along the south edge of Van Zandt Avenue to its intersection with Farewell Street. Here the boundary turns and runs southward along the east edge of Farewell Street to its intersection with America's Cup Avenue (former alignment of Walnut Street) where Farewell Street turns and heads southeastward. The boundary continues southeastward along the east edge of Farewell Street to a gate opening in the fence surrounding Island Cemetery and Common Burial Ground. From the gate the line runs southeast along a line drawn from the gate to a point on the north side of Warner Street directly opposite its intersection with Burnside Street (at the westernmost point of 13/17. (The line cuts through 13/53 and follows a rough line of trees, an unpaved footpath, and a chain-link fence.)

From Warner Street the boundary moves to the north corner of 18/17, where it turns again and follows the southeast side of Warner Street to the intersection with Kingston Avenue.

The boundary crosses Kingston Avenue and follows along the northwest boundary of 13/46 to the north corner of the lot. Here the boundary turns and proceeds southeastward along the rear lot lines of properties on the east side of Kingston Avenue (from 13/46 through 14/193) to Dr. Marcus Wheatland Boulevard (formerly West Broadway) to the west corner of 14/193.

Here the boundary turns and heads southwest, crossing Wheatland Boulevard to the north corner of 18/123, along the rear lot lines 18/178, 166, and 137 to the east corner of 18/131 at Broadway, then along the northeast edge of Broadway to its intersection with Bull Street.

Broadway to Spring Street:

At a point opposite the southwest line of Bull Street, the boundary turns and crosses Broadway, then follows southeastward along the southwest edge of Bull Street to Mount Vernon Street, then crosses Mt. Vernon Street and passes along the lot line of 21/93) to the north corner of the lot, where it turns and follows the rear line of 21/93 and 94 until it meets the northeast line 21/109.

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The boundary then turns southeast along the rear lot lines of 21/111, 117, and 197. At the west corner of 21/197, the line passes to the easternmost corner of 21/118, then moves northwest to the eastern corner of 21/192, then along the southeast lines of 21/192 to the intersection with Whitfield Place. From that point the boundary passes along the northwest lines of 21/107, 106, 105, 104-4, and 104 to the intersection with Touro Street.

The boundary crosses Touro Street, then runs in a roughly southerly direction along the west side of Touro Street as it becomes Bellevue Avenue, to a point opposite the northwest corner of 25/99 (the Redwood Library); the boundary then turns east and passes along the south line of Redwood Street, the west side of Cottage Street, and the north side of Old Beach Road, to meet Bellevue Avenue once more.

The line crosses Bellevue Avenue, then passes roughly south along the west side of Bellevue to the westernmost point of 28/151. Then the boundary moves west along the north side of William Street to the southeast corner of 28/92, crosses William Street to the northeast corner of 28/101, then passes south along the west side of King Street to the southeast corner of 28/139, then west along the south lines of 28/139 and 109. From the southwest corner of 28/109, the boundary passes north to the southernmost point of 28/106 (crossing Golden Hill Street). From this point, the boundary moves along the north side of Golden Hill Street to its intersection with Spring Street.

Spring Street to Brick Market:

At the intersection of Golden Hill Street and Spring Street, the boundary crosses Spring Street to the northeast corner of 27/164, then goes south along the street line of Spring Street to its intersection with Pope Street at the southeast corner of 32/92. The line then passes along the north side of Pope Street to its intersection with Thames Street at the southwest corner of 32/78-4, and turns north along the east side of Thames Street until it reaches the northwest corner of 24/11.

From there the boundary crosses Thames Street to the southeast corner of 24/1 (the Brick Market) and passes west, north, and east along the south, west, and north lines of 24/1, to meet Thames Street once more.

Brick Market to Van Zandt Avenue:

From the northeast corner of 24/1, the line passes across Thames Street to the southeast corner of 17/220, then north along the west lot lines of 17/220 and 221 to the northwest corner of 17/221. From that point the line crosses Thames Street to meet the southeast corner of 17/235, then passes along the north line of West Marlborough Street to its intersection with America's Cup Avenue. The boundary then moves north along the east side of America's Cup Avenue until it crosses Bridge Street and meets the southwest corner of 17/51. From that point, the lines passes along the southern lot lines of 16/51, 52, 53, and 54, to the southwest corner of 16/54. It then crosses Bridge Street to meet the northwest corner of 16/81 and moves along the east lot lines of 16/81, 87-4, and 88, then along the north line of Marsh Street to the southeast corner of 16/94, and along the south side of 16/94 to Washington Street. From there, the line crosses Washington Street and continues roughly west, north, and east around the irregular boundary of 16/232 and 236 to the southwest corner of 16/32. From there the boundary follows the shoreline of Newport Harbor to the point of beginning.

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Boundary Justification:

The boundaries of the Newport Historic District are selected to encompass the highly unified concentration of seventeenth-century, eighteenth-century, and nineteenth- through early twentieth-century buildings within the historic center of Newport. The boundaries generally conform to the compact eighteenth-century town limits as documented in historic maps.

The harbor front itself, west of Thames Street and south of Marsh Street, is excluded due to extensive urban renewal demolition and new construction along with recent large-scale developments which have destroyed some of the historic fabric and ambience. Beyond the district to the north, east, and south, the neighborhood character developed primarily in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The district is fundamentally distinguished by its outstanding assemblage of colonial seaport period buildings and streetscapes which are filled in with later construction. It continues to serve as the city's center today.

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