WEST PARISH MEETING HOUSE HISTORIC SITE

&

STATE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRESERVE

A PRESERVATION PLAN AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

WESTPORT
CONNECTICUT

JANUARY 2011

This report is an initiative of the Westport Historic District Commission (HDC) in conjunction with the Town of Westport, Connecticut. Funding was provided by the Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants (HPTAG) program, a collaborative historic preservation granting program of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, with funding from the Connecticut General Assembly, the Connecticut Humanities Council and the Commission on Culture and Tourism through the Community Investment Act. HPTAG supports efforts that help communities throughout the state plan for the preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of historic places.

Special assistance was provided by Westport Historic District Commission members Margaret Feczko, Chair; Elizabeth Wacker, Vice-Chair; Francis H. Henkels, and Grayson C. Braun; Carol Leahy CLG Coordinator and HDC Staff Administrator; Allen Raymond, Municipal Historian; and Alicia Mozian, Conservation Director. The contents and opinions contained herein do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the participating organizations, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Westport HDC, the Town of Westport or the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation.

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Published by the
Westport Historic District Commission

Prepared by
Landscape Elements LLC

with
Fuss & O'Neill, Inc.
James Gibbs AIA Architect
Archaeological Consulting Services

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION 2

SECTION 2 - HISTORY, ANALYSIS & EVALUATION
History & Archaeology 6
Existing Conditions 14
Analysis & Evaluation 16

SECTION 3 - PRESERVATION TREATMENT PLAN
Treatment Guidelines 20
Treatment Plan/Concept Design 22
Record of Treatment 27
Projected Costs 27
Responsible Agency or Party 27
Interpretation and Education 30
Sustainability 30
Health and Safety 32
Maintenance 32

SECTION 4 - IMPLEMENTATION
Overview 42
Phasing 42
Permitting & Municipal Reviews 43
Community Involvement 43
Summary and Conclusions 44
Funding Resources 45

APPENDICES
Record of Treatment Form (sample) 47
Record of Maintenance Form (sample) 48
List of Figures 49
List of Tables 50
Bibliography 51

Fig 1-1 Aerial photo of project site and environs. Source Google Earth

SECTION 1 — INTRODUCTION

Project Purpose

This project presents a preservation plan for the archaeologically significant historic property known as the West Parish Meeting House Historic Site. The plan and supporting cultural landscape assessment provide an analysis of the property and a conceptual design or "treatment plan" for future work. In historic landscape preservation work, a "treatment plan" provides recommendations regarding the treatment of the historic site. The National Park Service's *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and *Guidelines for Cultural Landscape Reports* were followed in the preparation of this plan and assessment.

The recommended treatments for this site include limited enhancements focused on the preservation and protection of its archaeological resources. The plan also provides recommendations for interpretive signage to promote community understanding of the site's historic significance as well as recommendations for long term management Overall, the intent is to provide a resource and guide for the appropriate implementation of future preservation work and site enhancements so that this property remains an archaeological resource. The site has been threatened in the past by suggested uses that would have destroyed the extant archaeological artifacts. This plan and assessment reaffirm the site's status as a State Archaeological Preserve.

Project Boundaries

The site is a 5.9-acre parcel located close to the intersection of Green's Farms Road and the Sherwood Island Connector in the south central part of the Town of Westport, Connecticut. The site is within the Saugatuck River Watershed in the Western Coastal (V-A) ecoregion. The project area lies just west of Muddy Brook, a perennial stream that flows into the Mill Creek and Sherwood Millpond estuaries about one-half mile to the south.

The underlying bedrock is principally Straits Schist (Dst), a readily erodible Devonian formation on the order of 350 to 400 million years old. The formation is flanked immediately to the east by an older Ordovician unit of Trap Falls Schist (Otf) lining Muddy Brook. The surficial materials of the project area largely consist of a relatively thin veneer of glacial till over bedrock, with minor outcrops exposed in the very eastern and northwest sections of the property.

Site topography is undulating, with two areas containing minor bedrock outcroppings and a southern knoll or raised area containing the archaeological remains of a meeting house. The rest of the property contains wetland soils (Raypol silt loam - Rb) in lower-lying settings. Elevations on the property range between nearly 30 feet above mean sea level for the raised areas to roughly 15 feet above mean sea level for the wetland areas.

Historical Overview

The West Parish Meeting House Historic Site is recognized as having significance in at least three primary thematic areas:

- Pre-historic indigenous habitation
- Colonial settlement
- Revolutionary War

A brief historical background, culled from published histories and other secondary sources, may be found in the site history section. Research into primary records was limited to the town and church records cited later in this report and referenced in the bibliography.

Scope of Work and Methodology

The scope of work addresses the following points and issues of concern as outlined in the Request for Proposal which was issued by the Town of Westport Historic District Commission (HDC). The HDC requested a preservation plan for the site that included the following:

- Conceptual site plan for development that respects and reflects the history of the property
- Plan for the protection of archaeological resources
- Concepts for interpretive signage
- Long-term maintenance plan for the site
- An approach that promotes awareness and understanding of the importance of the site in the history of Westport.
- Appropriate passive uses that reflect site history, preserve archaeological resources and protect the property from future development.

Existing archaeological research, site maps, site surveys, historic images and historic documents were made available through the HDC Staff Administrator, town departments and members of the HDC. In addition, meetings were held with town department heads, the Municipal Historian and the public to obtain information and perspectives about the site and its future. A final presentation of the treatment plan and assessment was made in October 2010 to the HDC and the general public prior to finalizing this report.

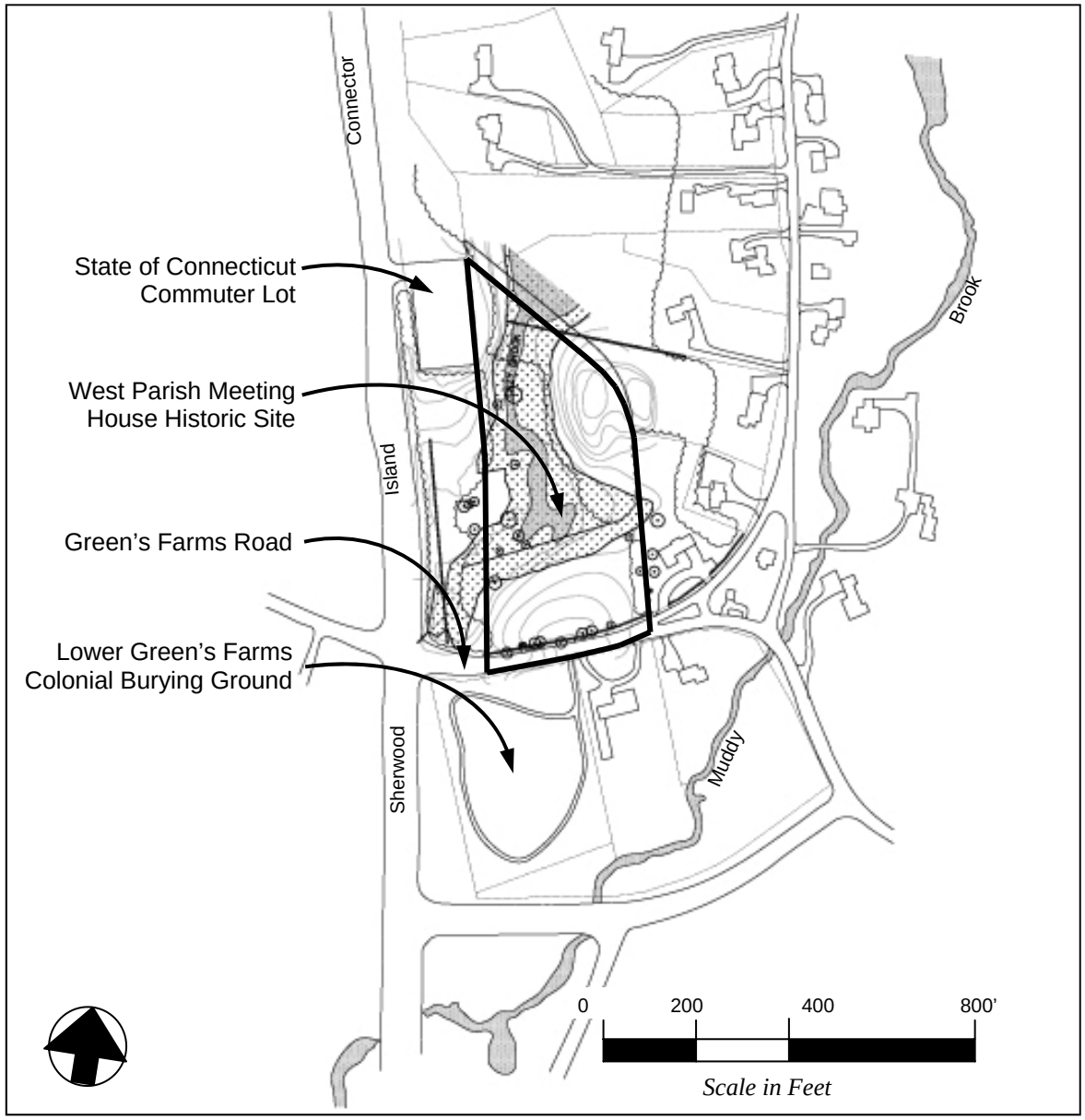


Figure 1-2 Plan showing immediate vicinity surrounding the West Parish Meeting House Historic Site.

The process for conducting the work on this project was divided into the following three tasks.

Task 1 - Project Initiation

Work for this task included a preliminary planning meeting with the Historic District Commission (HDC) and town departments, review of existing research and reports and the preparation of a cultural landscape analysis. The design team completed a site analysis in June 2010, having previously viewed the site in February 2010. Team members also met with Town of Westport department heads to obtain their perspectives on the site. This meeting was held with representatives and heads of the Departments of Planning, Public Works, Police, Fire and Inland Wetland and Conservation so that team members could understand the town perspective on natural resources preservation, current maintenance practices, traffic circulation, emergency staging and open space preservation. A public hearing was also held to obtain information from neighbors and town residents.

Task 2 - Draft Preservation Plan, Concept Design & Interim Reviews

Work for this task included the preparation of a draft preservation plan report and concept design/ treatment plan along with interim reviews with the Historic District Commission and a site visit in September 2010 to evaluate site conditions in early fall. A meeting with HDC members and the general public was also held to review the draft assessment and preservation plan and obtain comments. A third site visit and meeting with HDC members was held in August 2010 to present project progress and provide team members with a view of the site with mowed fields.

Task 3 - Final Preservation Plan & Report

Work for this task included the preparation and presentation of the final preservation plan and concept design (treatment plan) to the HDC and the public in October 2010.

The methodology for this report is based on the "*Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*" prepared in 1998 for the U. S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program. The conceptual design plan is based on the guidelines for treatment plans in the previously noted guide and on the *U. S. Department of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Similar to a formal Cultural Landscape Report (CLR), this assessment provides recommendations for the treatment of a cultural landscape. The report and treatment plan also serve to guide the long-term management of the landscape.

A formal CLR has three primary parts, and this document is organized based on these same three components, which are:

- Site History, Existing Conditions, Analysis & Evaluation
- Treatment Plan
- Record of Treatment

Also included in this document are sections on implementation to address permitting and reviews, possible funding sources and community interaction and involvement. As one of the HDC's goals for this site, Section 3 addresses enhancement of the educational experience for schoolchildren and residents of the area through interpretive signage. Section 4 discusses community involvement.

What is a Cultural Landscape?

Cultural landscapes are an integral component of historic preservation. Beginning in 1988 "cultural landscapes" were formally identified by the National Park Service (NPS) as "a type of cultural resource" that is significant in preserving our national heritage, particularly within the National Park system.

Policies were established to "mandate the recognition and protection of significant historic, design, archaeological and ethnographic values." These policies recognized the importance of considering both built and natural features in preservation. In 1994 the NPS established its "*Cultural Resource Management Guideline"*. The NPS has also worked to interpret and apply two documents to cultural landscapes. Those documents are the *National Register of Historic Places Criteria* and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.*

The three documents cited above have provided the framework for the NPS cultural landscape program. This program has become a primary resource for the documentation, evaluation and treatment of cultural landscapes at the state and local levels, as well as for the park service to evaluate its national parks

By definition a cultural landscape is "a geographic area including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity or person or that exhibits other cultural or aesthetic values."

There are four general types of cultural landscapes. These landscape types are not mutually exclusive.

Historic designed landscapes: a landscape significant as a design or work of art that was consciously designed and laid out by either a master gardener, landscape architect, architect or horticulturalist.
Historic vernacular landscapes: a landscape whose physical, biological and cultural features reflect the customs, spatial patterns and everyday lives of the people who have used the site throughout its history.
Historic sites: a landscape significant for its association with a historic event, activity, or person
Ethnographic landscapes: a landscape containing a variety of natural and cultural resources that associated people define as heritage resources, i.e. ceremonial grounds and community settlements.

The West Parish Meeting House Historic Site is both a historic site and a vernacular landscape. It may also be considered an ethnographic landscape due to its importance as the site of the second West Parish Meeting House for the Colonial that predated the community of Westport (Fairfield).

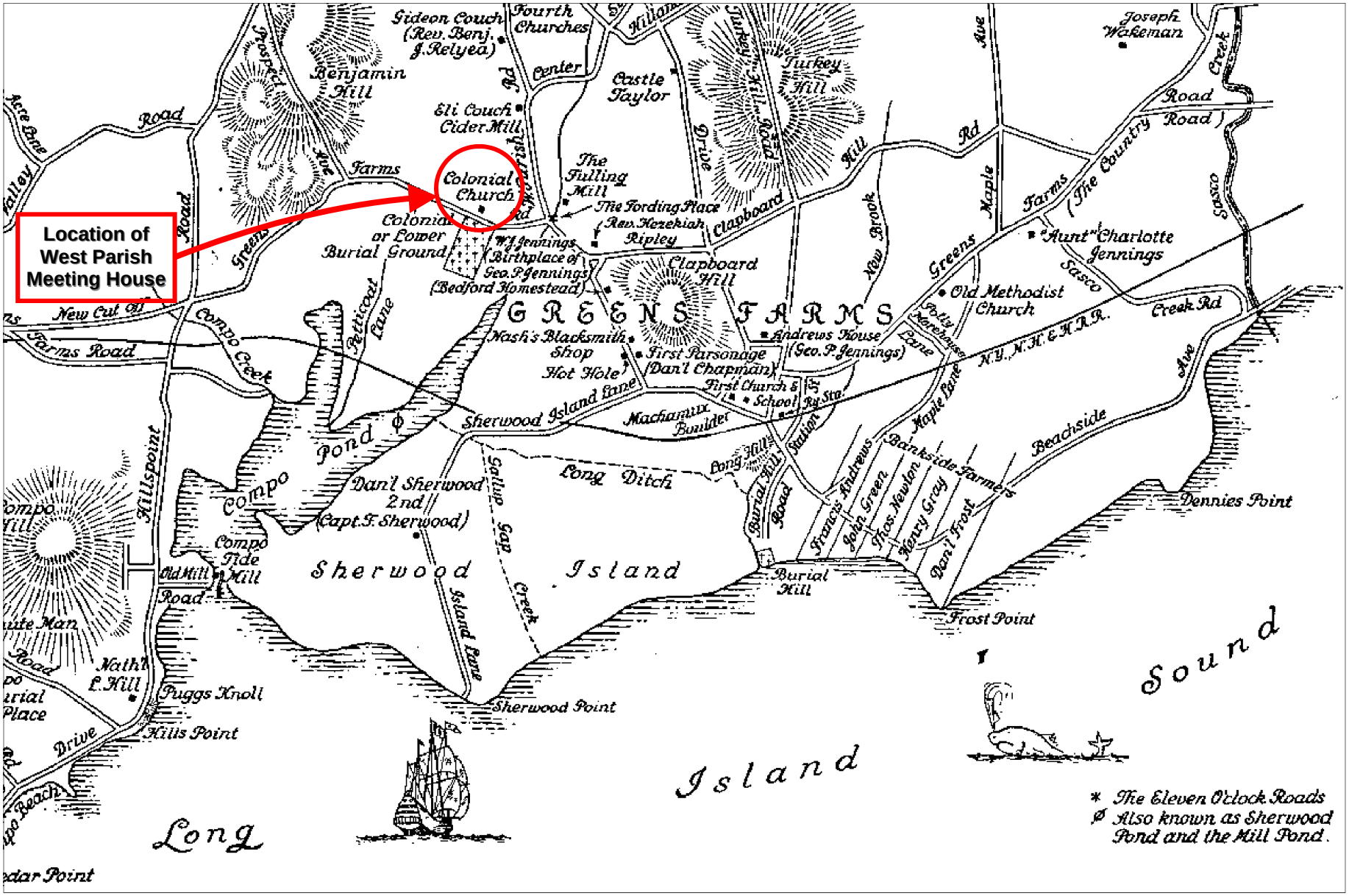


Fig. 2-1 Detail of 1933 interpretive map of the Green's Farms area by George P. Jennings.

SECTION 2 — HISTORY, ANALYSIS & EVALUATION

HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY

The Site History Section of a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) gives an historical description of the landscape and all significant characteristics and features. It also identifies the historical context and the period or periods of significance associated with the landscape.

Indigenous Peoples

The subject property, near the confluence of Muddy and Lazy Brooks and just inland from tidal waters, was undoubtedly habited by indigenous peoples for many years. Archaeological evidence places indigenous habitation in southern New England as far back as 10,000 years. More recently, the Woodland Period (700BC-1633AD) initiated the development of local agriculture and the manufacture of pottery. Agriculture provided a steady food supply that in turn encouraged sedentism over nomadic life.

By the time of widespread European contact in the early 1600s, the Algonquian tradition characterized what would become Fairfield County. The Westport area was further defined as the Paugussett/ Pootatuck group, though there were many dialects and sub-groups such as the Aspetuck, Compaw, Machamux, Pequonnock, Sasqua, Saugatuck and Uncowa. An 1889 published history of Fairfield describes the remaining native settlements that were believed to exist at the time of English settlement: Accordingly, the Sasqua occupied lands about the Great Swamp and Sasco Creek; the Machamux occupied the lands west of Sasco Creek to Compo, extending inland to the Aspectuck River; the Compaw occupied the lands between Compo and the Saugatuck River.

However, with European exploration and trade came disease that decimated the tribes of coastal New England. It has been estimated by some that less than 10% of the indigenous peoples who had just recently populated the area survived by the time the English began their permanent settlements.

Colonial Settlement

The first English settlers of Connecticut were from the Massachusetts Bay Colony, founding the Connecticut River Valley towns of Windsor, Wethersfield and Hartford in 1635. In 1636, the General Court of Massachusetts appointed the first governing body of what would become the Connecticut Colony. One of the first acts of this new government was to declare war on the Pequots of southeastern Connecticut.

While in the opposite side of the Colony, Westport shares in this history because it was in the Great Swamp along Sasco Creek, which today forms the town's eastern border with Fairfield. Here the last of the fugitive Pequot, under the leadership of the Sachems Sassacus and Mononotto, were hunted down. This battle, known as the Great Swamp Fight, took place in July 1637 not far to the east of the subject property.

In 1639, just two years after the Pequot War, the deputy governor of the newly established Connecticut Colony, Roger Ludlow, led the establishment of the first settlement in Fairfield County on a large tract of land purchased from the Pequonnock, setting aside reservations for various clans or subtribes. This is where the Fairfield Town Green now stands. The tract of land so purchased was known originally as Uncoway, after the Uncawa tribe, and included what today forms the towns of Fairfield, Redding, Weston, Easton, part of Bridgeport and most of Westport. In 1645, the settlement was formally named Fairfield as the fourth town established in the Connecticut Colony and the first outside the Connecticut River Valley.

For its first two centuries, the entire area east of the Saugatuck River, in what is now Westport, was part of the Town of Fairfield. In 1648, five "Bankside Farmers" settled in what would become the Town of Westport. Known first simply as Bankside, this settlement was located on elevated coastal land between Sasco and New Creeks in the Frost Point vicinity and near Green's Farms.

In 1703, a schoolhouse was erected just north of Bankside, in what was then known as the Western Farms, now Green's Farms. In 1708, the Bankside settlers petitioned the Connecticut General Assembly to recognize the "inhabitants of the Western Farms within the said Town of Fairfield" as a separate parish. This was approved but it was not until eight years later, in 1720, that the first meeting house of the "West Parish of Fairfield" was completed. It was located just east of New Creek, near Machamux Rock, at the foot of what is now Morningside Drive South.

In the theocratic tradition of the day, the meeting house was for both church and state. This first meeting house is said to have been "36-foot square and 16-foot high" with a pyramidal roof, typical of early Colonial era meeting houses. It was built of hewn oak and clapboard, modeled on the Fairfield

Fig. 2-2 Interpretive illustration of West Parish Meeting House for Westport Bicentennial.

Fig. 2-3 Alna Meeting House, Maine.

Fig. 2-4 Interior of Alna Meeting House, Maine.

meeting house. A cemetery was laid out in 1725 a half mile west along the "Country Road" (now Green's Farms Road) on the opposite side of Muddy Brook.

By the 1720s this farming community had prospered, broadening its settlement to encompass land from the tidewater of Compo Cove and the fresh headwaters of Muddy Brook, into the northerly interior of town, to the so-called Long Lots. Compo Neck, which stretches westerly from the Cove to the mouth of the Saugatuck River, was also settled. By 1732, the West Parish had three school districts reflecting the settlement pattern to date – Muddy Brook, Long Lots and Compo. With the continued growth of the West Parish settlement, a new and larger meeting house was erected between 1735 and 1740 about a half mile west of the original along the "Country Road" (now Green's Farms Road) just west of a schoolhouse and opposite the cemetery. The site of the meeting house and its probable associated schoolhouse are the subject of this preservation plan and cultural landscape assessment.

Revolutionary War

The West Parish saw action during the Revolutionary War, as its agrarian market redirected itself to the cause of supplying American troops. To disrupt these patriotic efforts, a British sea force, under General William Tryon, landed at Compo Point on April 25, 1777, and marched northward to pillage military stores stockpiled at Danbury. Three days later, as the British returned to their ships, another battle took place at Compo Hill. Two years later, on July 7, 1779, Tryon's forces returned in a further attempt to disrupt the supply lines to the Continental Army. Landing at McKenzie's Point and marching over Sasco Hill, the first exchange of gunfire was near Black Rock in Fairfield. A simultaneous invasion led by the British General George Garth landed near Mill River in what is today Southport and marched to join Tryon. Encountering resistance, homes were set afire by the British. As the British returned to their ships the next day, almost every structure they passed was burned – it was "desolation warfare" in General Tryon's own words – a strategy of the British to demoralize the citizenry. In the West Parish, the meeting house, fifteen houses and eleven barns were burned to the ground. Consider the following proclamation by Tryon:

"That owing to their delusion in hoping for independence they were deceiving themselves; that the existence of a single habitation on your defenseless coast ought to be a constant proof of your ingratitude. Therefore we offer you a refuge against the distress which you universally acknowledge broods with increasing & intolerable weight over all your country; & that whosoever shall be found, & remain in peace at his usual place of residence, shall be shielded from any insult either to his property, excepting such as bear offices, either civil or military, under your present usurped government, of whom it will be further required that they shall give proof of their penitence & voluntary submission, when they shall partake of the like immunity. But those whose folly & obstinacy shall slight this favorable warning must take notice that they are not to expect a continuance of that lenity which their inveterancy would not now render blameless." (Banks 1960:62)

In the spirit of independence and perseverance, the retort by Colonel Whiting leading Fairfield troops followed:

"Connecticut has nobly dared to take up arms against the cruel despotism of Britain, and as the flames have now preceded your flag, they will persist to oppose the utmost that power exerted against injured innocence" (Banks 1960:62)

The Early Republic

With the cessation of the Revolution, and given that the focus of settlement had moved continually inland during the eighteenth century, it was decided to rebuild a meeting house closer to what is now downtown Westport. In 1789, ten years after the West Parish Meeting House was destroyed, a new one was built on Hillandale Road. The site of the second meeting house of the West Parish reverted to agrarian use, at first and for a number of years by the Couch family, and remained otherwise undeveloped for more than two centuries. In 1818, separation of church and state was officially established in Connecticut. When the Hillandale Road meeting house burned in 1852, it was replaced the next year in the architectural style we now typically associate with churches, not meeting houses. The 1852 church stands today at Hillandale Road.

In 1835, Westport had been incorporated as a separate town, though it at first excluded the West Parish. The name "Westport" was selected to reflect the port's new prominence in western Connecticut. In 1842, the West Parish was annexed to the newly formed Town of Westport, with the West Parish taking on the common name of Green's Farms. Historic maps from the mid-19th century show no development in the project area, with the cemetery lying to the south (Clark 1856; Beers 1867).

The Meeting House

Archaeological investigations place the site of the second West Parish Meeting House to be within the raised knoll in the southern portion of the project site set approximately 20 feet from the stone wall that runs along Green's Farms Road. *"The site is nearly opposite the gateway of the Colonial Burying Ground"*, writes George P. Jennings in his history of the town in 1933. Nevertheless, the precise location of the structure is still not known. Similarly, no rendering of the building is known to exist. Based on town and church records, and historic precedents for other meeting houses, an interpretive illustration of the building was done for the Westport Bicentennial. (Figure 2-2.)

Colonial and church records were researched and cited in support of the nomination for State Archeological Preserve status. These records date the West Parish Meeting House, and help delineate both the architecture of the building and the historic configuration of the site. The following records are particularly noteworthy:

- December 9, 1736: *"Att a meeting of ye west Parish held being legally formed…(just?) to vote whether or not ye Parish would build a Meeting House for ye Publick Worship of God and more then towe thirds of ye Parish then Present att ye meeting voted in ye Affirmative." (Source: Town of Westport Colonial Records)*

- October 26, 1737: A committee appointed by the General Assembly *"To ascertain a place for ye erecting a meeting house in ye West Society in Fairfield have in performance thereof Reported to S^{d} Society & having (?) the Circumstances of y^{e} (?) & heard the Parties (therein?) do make the following Report (?) We ascertain S^{d} State of place for ye erecting a meeting House in S^{d} Society about four rods & (near?) 5 foot South westerly from ye South westerly Corner of ye School House in S^{d} Society Standing on ye west Side of Muddy Brook so Called there to (be?) ye Southeast Corner of (where?) S^{d} meeting House Shall be erected…" (Source: Town of Westport Colonial Records)*

- May 4, 1738: A report to the town meeting indicates that the town is moving forward in the procurement of "*the timber for a house fifty two foot long and forty foot wide and twenty six foot post", as well as " ye clapboards & shingles for ye house". (Source: Town of Westport Colonial Records)*

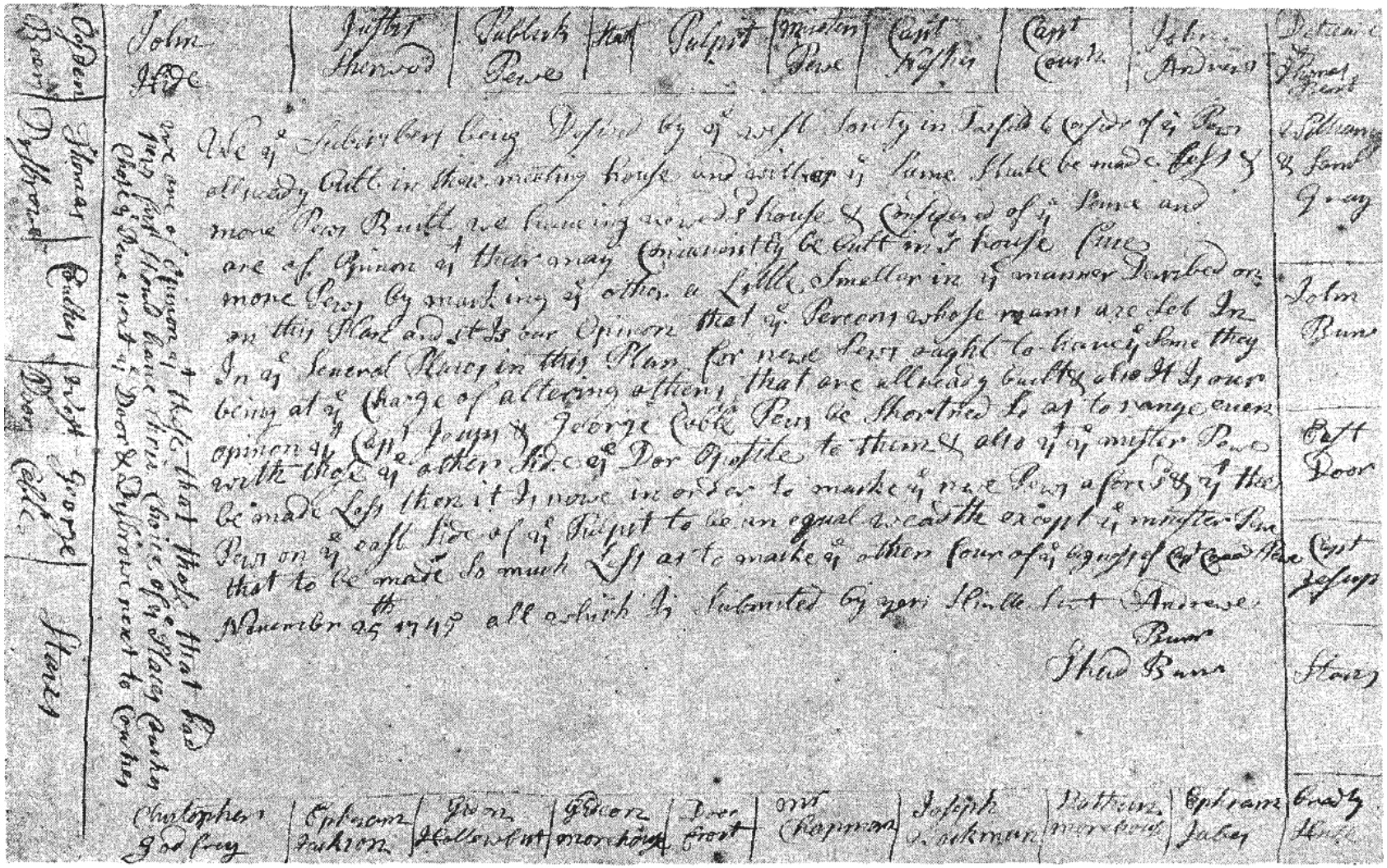
- November 25, 1745: Church records show a plan of pews, with the long axis of the building paralleling the road, the "door front" located in the middle of the long façade, doors located centrally in both the east and west walls, and "pulpit" opposite the front door. "Stairs" are shown at the south side of both the east and west walls. *(Source: Green's Farms Colonial Church Records)*

The meeting house was thus two stories in height, and almost certainly there were mezzanines (galleries) at both ends. The central entrance was probably flanked by two windows to each side, typical of Colonial era building proportions. Upper level windows would have aligned with door and windows below. (Refer to Figure 2-5.) Such a meeting house was a common prototype in New England. Among the prototypical examples of this sort of meeting

(Pulpit)

(West Door)

(East)



(Stairs)

(Stairs)

(Door Front)

Fig. 2-5 Pew plan of the second West Parish Meeting House, circa 1741. Source: Westport Historic District Commission files

house is the meeting house in Alna, Maine, built to the exact same dimensions as reported for the West Parish meeting house. The interior and exterior photographs of the Alna meeting house illustrate this prototype. (Figures 2-3 and 2-4).

The West Parish Meeting House of this project site had a belfry, but it is not clear whether the belfry was original to the building or added when the bell was hung in 1755. Local tradition presumes the belfry to have been located at one of the side gable ends, and there is precedent for this in New England. Extant examples of similar meeting houses with side gable steeples are found in Brooklyn, CT, and West Barnstable, MA. (Figure 2-6). An interpretive rendering of the second West Parish Meeting House showing a belfry was included in a pamphlet dated 1911 celebrating the bicentennial of the Congregational Society of Green's Farms. (Figure 2-2).

The Schoolhouse

There is less historic documentation substantiating the location of a possible schoolhouse for this project site. As was typical of that period, a probable schoolhouse was usually associated with and was located within close proximity to the meeting house structure. Education was of primary importance in Colonial settlements and the care and regulation of the schools remained with the parish. Archaeological investigations at this site were unable to confirm any artifacts for the schoolhouse.

In a town historic record titled "*Celebration in Green's Farms. The Historical Discourse delivered at the Celebration of the One hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the formation of the church in Green's Farms, held Oct. 26, 1865, by Rev. B. J. Relyea,*" there is a reference to the schoolhouse:" *The first schoolhouse stood near the meeting house, on the Green. Here the school was held for a number of years; but as the settlement of Compo increased, it was no longer sufficiently central. The experiment was tried of having two schools, one at the old place and one in Compo. But there was not sufficient strength to support two schools. After various efforts at compromise, the school was brought down to the west side of Muddy Brook, near Mr. Lockwoods's.*" This reference alludes to the location of a schoolhouse on this project site which is to the west of Muddy Brook.

Archaeological Investigations

An archaeological investigation of the site was undertaken in 1986 by archaeologist Lucinda McWeeney, Ph.D., in her capacity as Municipal Historian. At that time the site was registered with the state as archaeological site # 158-56, with significance for both the indigenous Middle Woodland and Colonial eras.

In 1989, the property was entered on the State Inventory of Historic Places and designated by the Westport Representative Town Meeting (RTM) as a Local Historic Property. Further archaeological study was done in 2009 to locate the original excavation grid of the 1986 survey and to prepare, in collaboration with the State Office of Archaeology, a nomination for the site as a State Archaeological Preserve. Upon the request of the Historic District Commission, First Selectman Gordon Joseloff appointed a special committee under the auspices of the HDC to provide a public forum to discuss future plans for the site. On September 8, 2009, the HDC proposed nominating the West Parish Meeting House Historic Property as a State Archaeological Preserve with the subsequent approval of the Board of Selectmen on October 14, 2009.

Figure 2-6 West Barnstable, MA meeting house. Structure is of the same period as West Parish Meeting House.

On November 10, 2009, The Representative Town Meeting (RTM) voted in support of the proposed archaeological preserve nomination. Finally, on February 3, 2010, the Connecticut Historic Preservation Council, with the assistance of State Archaeologist, Nicholas A. Bellantoni, Ph.D., approved the designation of the West Parish Meeting House as a State Archaeological Preserve.

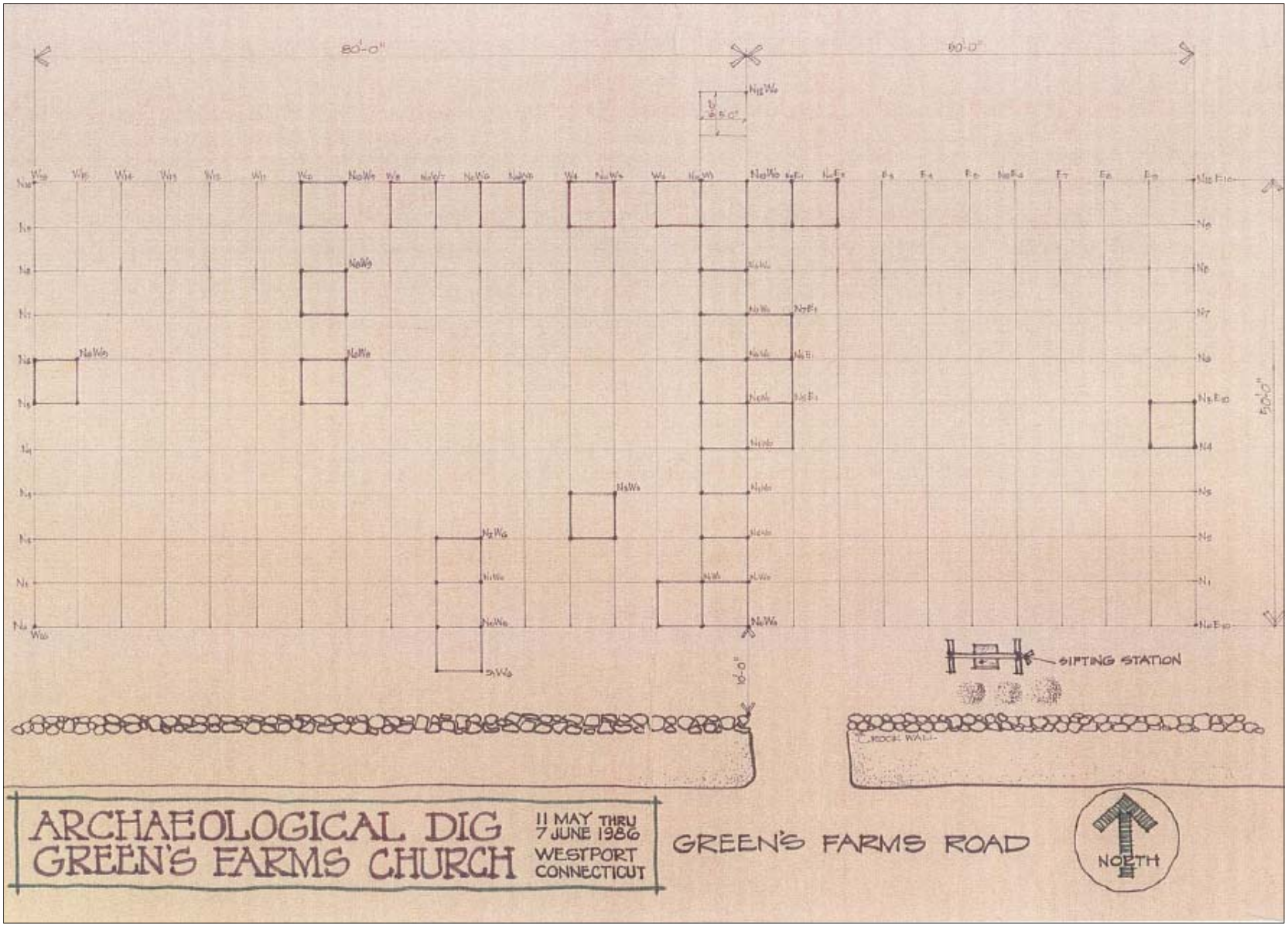


Fig. 2-7 1986 plan showing archaeological test pits excavated by Lucinda McWeeney, Ph.D. Source: Westport Historic District Commission

Gregory Walwer, Ph.D. of Archaeological Consulting Services (ACS), a member of this project team, provided a review and assessment of prior archaeological studies as well as a field analysis of the project site. His work focused on evaluating the proposed treatment plan in relation to the probable locations of the meeting house, the probable related schoolhouse and any Native American artifacts so that any proposed treatments did not adversely impact existing archaeological resources. Dr. Walwer reviewed the previous archaeological work of Dr. McWeeney, Dr. Bellantoni and archaeologist Elizabeth Wacker, MA, and visited the project site. Dr. Walwer's report is summarized as follows:

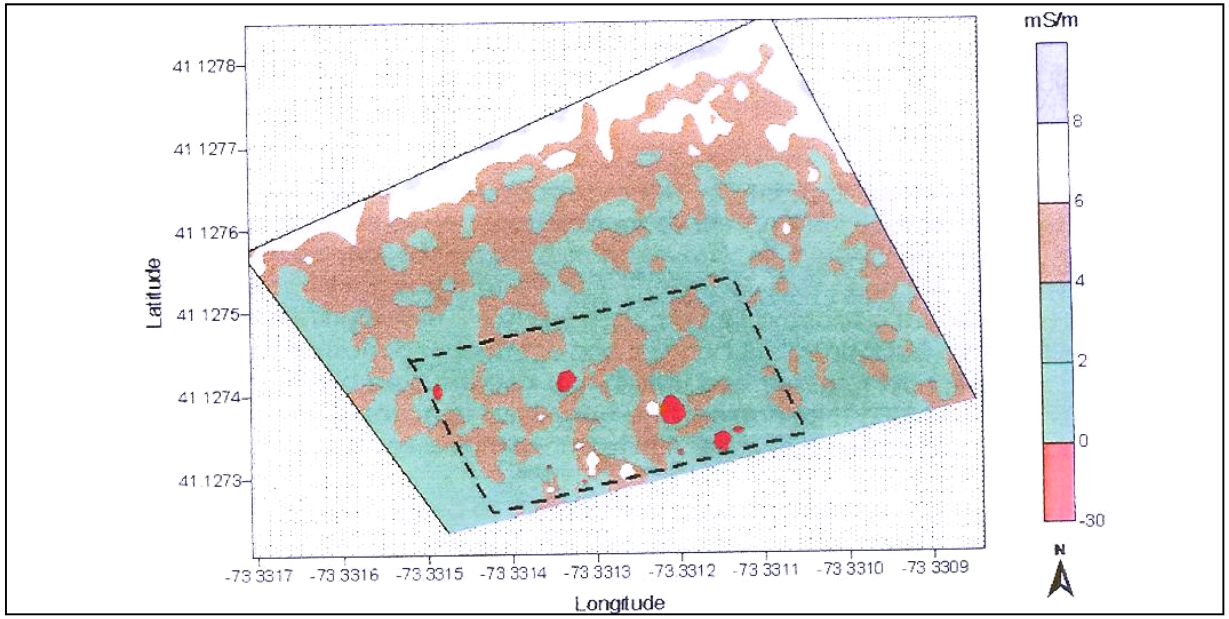


Fig. 2-8 Graph showing data from electromagnetic induction survey. The black dashed rectangle depicts the approximate location of the meeting house within a larger four-sided grid.

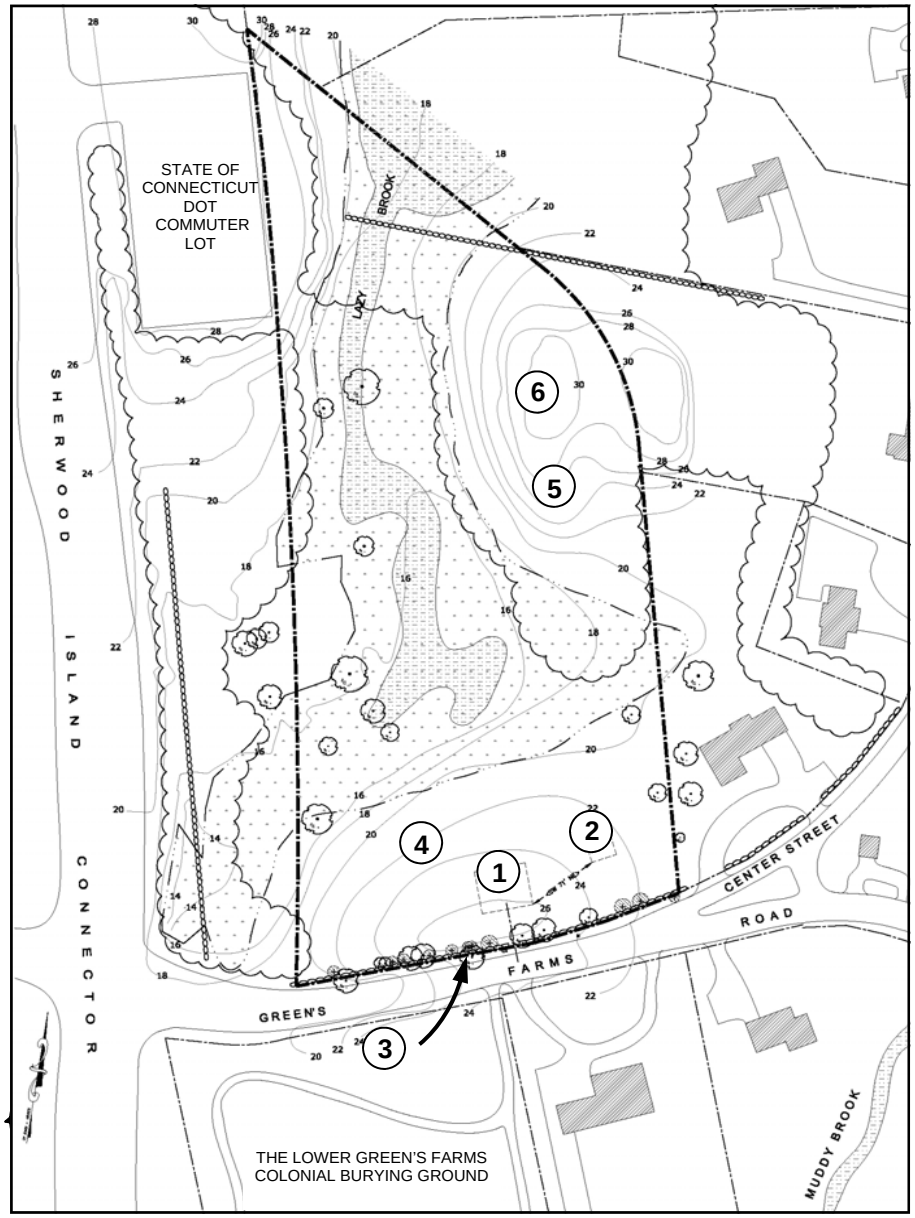
A field visit in June 2010 confirmed much information obtained during background research. The four rebar rods placed by archaeologist Elizabeth Wacker, MA, were located, and the general dimensions of the corresponding ground penetrating radar (GPR) grid were paced off to confirm dimensions and relate it to existing landscape and cultural features.

The main cultural feature observable at the surface is a prominent stone wall that lines Green's Farms Road along the southern boundary of the property. Other stone wall sections have been mapped along the western boundary and in the far northern section of the property. The stone walls are generally on the order of two to three feet high and at least as broad, with stone pillars marking a gap in the stone wall towards the center of the southern knoll or raised area. Constructed of locally available gneiss and schist fieldstones, some of the stone wall is dilapidated, while some sections have been pointed with cement for repair. This includes some of the stonework around the gate, with many unpointed areas having surfaces that may indicate that the wall, and particularly the gate, are not directly reflective of the original historic orientation of these features.

Within the southern knoll, tall grasses were about waist to chest-high at the time of the field survey in June 2010. Slightly taller grasses were observed just east of center, possibly representing subsurface anomalies related to the historic site. The limited visibility due to tall vegetation precluded further inspection of surface conditions.

Background research indicates both prehistoric and historic sensitivity for the project property. The setting of the property without deeply stacked glacial meltwater sediments, coarse sandy loams, or proximity to a larger body of water renders it less than statistically high with respect to prehistoric sensitivity, although prior excavations at the site have already recorded prehistoric material, and similar ecological settings in the immediate surrounding area have also revealed evidence of small prehistoric camp sites.

Possible Native American camp site locations being present in less than ideal settings are likely related to the presence of fresh water in relatively close proximity to nearby tidal estuaries which would have provided a wealth of resources. This general ecotone, the zone at the boundary of two ecosystems, has proven in other regions to contain very high densities of hunter-gatherer sites. It is recommended that any subsurface impacts on this site be preceded by professional archaeological reconnaissance testing and evaluation.



LEGEND

1. Site of the Historic West Parish Meeting House
2. Possible site of Colonial schoolhouse
3. Existing pedestrian opening in stone wall
4. Raised area/knoll
5. Area of boulder outcrops
6. High point

Existing tree

Existing tree to be removed

0 30 60 120 240'

Scale in Feet

Figure 2-9 Existing Conditions Plan: Source AutoCAD drawing from composite plan maps provided by Town of Westport.

SECTION 2 — HISTORY, ANALYSIS & EVALUATION

EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Existing Conditions Section of a Cultural landscape Report (CLR) describes the landscape as it currently exists. The review of existing conditions includes landscape characteristics such as land use, vegetation, circulation and structures. The review is focused on characteristics that relate to or influence the proposed treatment.

The Site Analysis for the West Parish Meeting House Historic Site involved field inspections of the entire property as well as reviews of existing aerial mapping, wetland mapping and archaeological reports. These field inspections were made in June 2010, August 2010 and September 2010 as well as an initial site visit in February 2010. The project team took note of land use for the site and the immediate surroundings, vegetation, wildlife habitat features, pedestrian and vehicular circulation and other unique landscape characteristics.

Land Use and Vegetation

The site is 5.9 acres in total and is currently not actively used by the community. It is a town-designated area for storage of debris and tree branches resulting from extreme storms. Roughly the northern two-thirds of the site contain wetlands as viewed on the Town of Westport GIS mapping and aerial photography. The other two major vegetation and habitat areas include a small forested upland in the northwest quadrant and an open field/ wet meadow area that lies across the southern one-third of the site. There is also a band of deciduous trees along the stonewall of the southern boundary at Green's Farms Road. Most of these trees and the underlying vegetation consist of invasive plant species that include Tree of Heaven (*Ailanthus sp*.), Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), Asiatic bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) poison ivy (Toxicodendron radicans) and grape ivy (*Parthenocissus tricusidata*). The open field/ meadow area does contain two large red maple trees (*Acer rubrum*) in the western quadrant. The wetland is largely wet meadow interspersed with shrub vegetation with an internal area of invasive phragmites (*Phragmites australis*). Wetland vegetation also includes a peripheral band of trees tolerant of wet soils. USDA Soil Maps for the property indicate the following four soil types:

- Raypole silty loam—within the wetland area
- Ninigret & Tisbury soils, 0-5% slopes within the existing meadow and wetland fringe areas
- Canton & Charlton soils, 3-8% slopes within the meadow fringes going into the forested uplands
- Urban land, Charlton-Chatfield complex, rocky, 3-15% slopes along the eastern side of the site and associated with the rocky overlook.

Vegetation species on the site include an arboreal overstory along the wetland fringe of red maple (*Acer rubrum*), ash (*Fraxinus sp.),* and tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*); shrub groupings of viburnum, swamp azalea (*Rhododendron viscosum*), high bush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*), summersweet (*Clethra alnifolia*) and fetterbush (*Lyonia lucida*); and a herbaceous layer that includes phragmites abutting the Connecticut Department of Transportation (CT DOT) commuter parking area, goldenrod (*Solidago sp*), marsh mallow, Joe Pye-Weed, New England aster, sedge grasses (*Carex sp*), soft rush (*Juncus sp*) and other facultative grass species are found along the meadow/wetland fringe.

Fig. 2-10 View of wetland area looking north.

Fig. 2-11 Joe Pye weed.

Fig. 2-12 Wild Aster and soft rush.

The wet meadow area at this site is currently mowed once or twice a year. The primary vegetation consists of meadow flowers, forbs and grasses. This meadow vegetation grows to 3 feet to 4 feet in height during the summer season.

The forested upland in the northwest quadrant is underlaid by bedrock and has large rock outcroppings present. Forested upland vegetation includes oak (*Quercus sp*), Norway and red maple (*Acer platanoides, Acer rubrum*) and a shrub understory that includes viburnum. Deer are present on the property and have contributed to diminishing the shrub understory. Herbaceous cover includes ferns with some invasive vines (Oriental bittersweet) along the sunnier fringe areas.

The land use immediately surrounding the West Parish Meeting House Historic Site includes large-lot residential properties along the east side and along the south side of Green's Farms Road; a Connecticut Department of Transportation commuter parking lot abutting the northwest quadrant; forested upland and wetland areas along the western edge between this property and the Sherwood Island Connector Road; and a historic Colonial cemetery across Green's Farms Road towards the southwest side of the property.

Wildlife Habitats

Along Green's Farms Road and the Sherwood Island Connector you will find species of wildlife that are more tolerant of human disturbance. Bird species such as rock dove (pigeon) are observed here, as well as American robin, English sparrow, and house finch. The mature trees provide breeding sites for squirrel, robin and other avian species.

With this property located so closely to the coast, the small green fragments of the ecosystem along the road provide some habitat value, particularly during spring and fall bird migrations. Many of the avian species sighted here during these times are simply using the tree canopy as a resting stopover and will move on within 12 hours. Expected visitors during migration of Long Island Sound would include numerous species of warblers.

The residential properties abutting the meeting house site are well landscaped and include a variety of flowers, herbaceous cover, shrubs and trees. This vegetation provides cover habitat extending from the ground to the top of the tree canopy for a fairly diverse wildlife population. Some of the species may utilize the nearby wetlands as part of their habitat needs. Wildlife sitings include American robin, goldfinch, red-winged blackbird, white-tail deer, field mice, squirrel and chipmunk.

The wetland functions and values include valuable wildlife habitat as well as flood storage and groundwater recharge and discharge. The wetland also provides forage for a variety of wildlife, including mammals, birds and amphibians as well as an ephemeral area for dragonflies. Scientists have documented that the non-native, invasive Phragmites present at this site decreases the biodiversity of the wetland habitats,

The meadow provides tall grass habitat for rabbits, meadow voles, field mice and skunks. Woodchuck may use this area for burrows. Red fox and coyote may also hunt for small game along the fringe of the forest/meadow area. The meadow provides a diverse edge habitat that contributes to increased wildlife biodiversity.

Structures and Site Features

There are no building structures on this site although it was the site of the second West Parish Meeting House (1738-1779) and a possible related schoolhouse. Documentation to support the schoolhouse location is unsubstantial. There is a raised area/knoll within the southern portion of the site. Archaeological investigations have noted that the meeting house was located within this area. The existing stone wall that forms the southern property boundary along Green's Farms Road appears to have been constructed at varying times as well as having been repaired with concrete and mortar to shore up end stones near the existing opening and along the cap. Utility poles and overhead lines run the length of Green's Farm Road on the same side as the meeting house property. The stone wall runs along a north-south axis along the west property line.

Circulation

The property can be accessed directly from Green's Farms Road through an existing opening in the stone wall. The date of construction for this opening is unknown. This access is wide enough for pedestrians and small vehicles. The site can also be accessed from the east property line via the abutting property at the intersection of Green's Farms Road and Center Street Town vehicles access the site for mowing once or twice a year. Existing stone walls, steep topography and wetlands limit site access from the north, west and northeast of the site. There are some existing trails within the northwest portion of the site that provide access to some boulder outcroppings and the highest point on the property.

SECTION 2 — HISTORY, ANALYSIS & EVALUATION

ANALYSIS & EVALUATION

The Analysis and Evaluation section of a CLR compares findings from the site history and existing conditions to identify significant landscape characteristics and features that have historic integrity.

A cultural landscape must possess significance in at least one of four aspects of cultural heritage as defined by the National Register of Historic Places criteria:

- Association with a significant historic event,
- Association with a significant historic person,
- Embodiment of a method of construction,
- Example of high artistic or design values.

This site meets the first two criteria and has been designated a State Archaeological Preserve and a State Historic property. This site is associated both with a significant historic event in Westport's history and a significant person. As the location of the second West Parish Meeting House built in 1737/38, this was the center of civic affairs until the meeting house was burned in July 1779, during the Revolutionary War, by forces under the command of British General William Tryon. Tryon himself is an historic figure as he is considered responsible for the British policy of "devastation warfare" which was intended to demoralize the American colonists through the destruction of all religious and community buildings within settlements in the colonies.

The landscape characteristics and features that relate to this significant event and person are the meeting house and its probable associated schoolhouse. Neither structure is extant but archaeological investigations support their locations.

The raised knoll in the southern portion of the site is the defining landscape characteristic and feature of the property relating directly to the period of the West Parish Meeting House (1737/38-1779). This area is described in detail in the archaeological reports and historical resources inventories prepared by Lucinda McWeeney, Ph.D., of Yale University as well as by subsequent subsurface investigation and reports completed by archaeologist Elizabeth Wacker, M.A.., and Connecticut State Archaeologist, Nicholas Bellantoni, Ph.D., Gregory Walwer, Ph.D., of Archaeological Consulting Services (ACS), a team member for this project, has reviewed all of the prior studies and reports and has provided his evaluation, which is summarized in the History & Archaeology section of this assessment.

Below ground archaeological testing completed by Dr. McWeeney recovered material culture that was interpreted as artifacts of the Colonial meeting house. Subsequent ground penetrating radar (GPR) performed by Nicholas Bellantoni, Ph.D., and a team of students from the University of Connecticut Natural Resources Conservation Service revealed anomalies and negative EC values which are attributed to metallic objects. These anomalies and artifacts were found within a 32 x 20 meter grid at the southern portion of this site (Fig 2-8). Archaeological test pits revealed artifacts of charred nails and other findings dating to the possible period of the meeting house. These findings confirm the presence of a structure within this southern portion of the project site.

The probable schoolhouse associated with the meeting house has less support documentation. Historic records do describe the location of the meeting

Fig. 2-13 The project site as viewed across the road from the Lower Green's Farms Colonial Burying Ground.

Fig. 2-14 Stone wall along Green's Farms Road.

Fig. 2-15 The raised area/knoll within the southern portion of the site, looking east.

Figure 2-16 Winter view near the southwest end of the project site.

Figure 2-17 Winter view on Green's Farms Road.

Figure 2-18 The southeastern corner of the site.

house as "*about four rods and five feet southwesterly from the southwest corner of the schoolhouse in said society, standing on the west side of Muddy Brook." (Refer to Figure 2-19)*

The existing stone wall along the southern property boundary is the sole above-ground extant feature on the site. There is insufficient documentation to accurately determine the period for this wall. Visual observation shows changes in stone sizes and placement patterns along various sections. In addition, mortar and cement have been added in locations.

Recommendations from Gregory Walwer, Ph.D. regarding design treatments for this project focus on preservation of the archaeological artifacts. Background research indicates both prehistoric and historic sensitivity for the property. Page 13 provides more detailed information to substantiate Dr. Walwer's recommendations for proposed design treatments. Figure 2-19 shows a plan of the southern portion of the project site with recommended locations for a parking area and a Conservation Area.

Based on his review of the site and prior archaeological investigations, Dr. Walwer concluded that the historic sensitivity of the project site appeared limited to the southern knoll, which has been well documented in local historic literature as the site of the second West Parish Meeting House. The site is already listed with the State Register of Historic Places, and more recently as a State Archaeological Preserve.

Dr. Walwer provided these recommendations.

"*the site also appears eligible for the National Register of Historic places based on criteria A) "association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history"; and D) its potential to "yield information important in prehistory or history." Unfortunately, the precise location of the meeting house site and nearby possible schoolhouse site is not known, although there are landscape aspects, cultural features, and results of prior excavations that help define the core area of the meeting house site. Based on the cultural landscape and archaeological investigations as well as a review of the site history, it is recommended that any proposed improvements including landscaping efforts should be subject to review by the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office.*

With respect to planned improvements, proposed clearing of vegetation and maintenance of the core site area as a grassy lawn would probably accomplish the best combination of site preservation and public site access. A 200-foot by 80-foot Conservation Area would confidently include the core area of the meeting house site, but without prior systematic testing further confident placement of the structure is limited. The 26-foot contour line just west of center about the gate is a topographic high and an appropriate point for locating the meeting house entrance, particularly since this area contains the north-south trench excavated by Dr. McWeeney. The next most confident estimation of site boundaries is the 24-foot contour that contains both the 1986 grid and the 2009 GPR grid. Note that the GPR grid was set 40 feet to the interior of the stone wall, while the 1986 grid was set just 10 feet off the stone wall, so there is not a perfect overlap. The recommended conservation area …would have to be preceded by archaeological testing and evaluation."

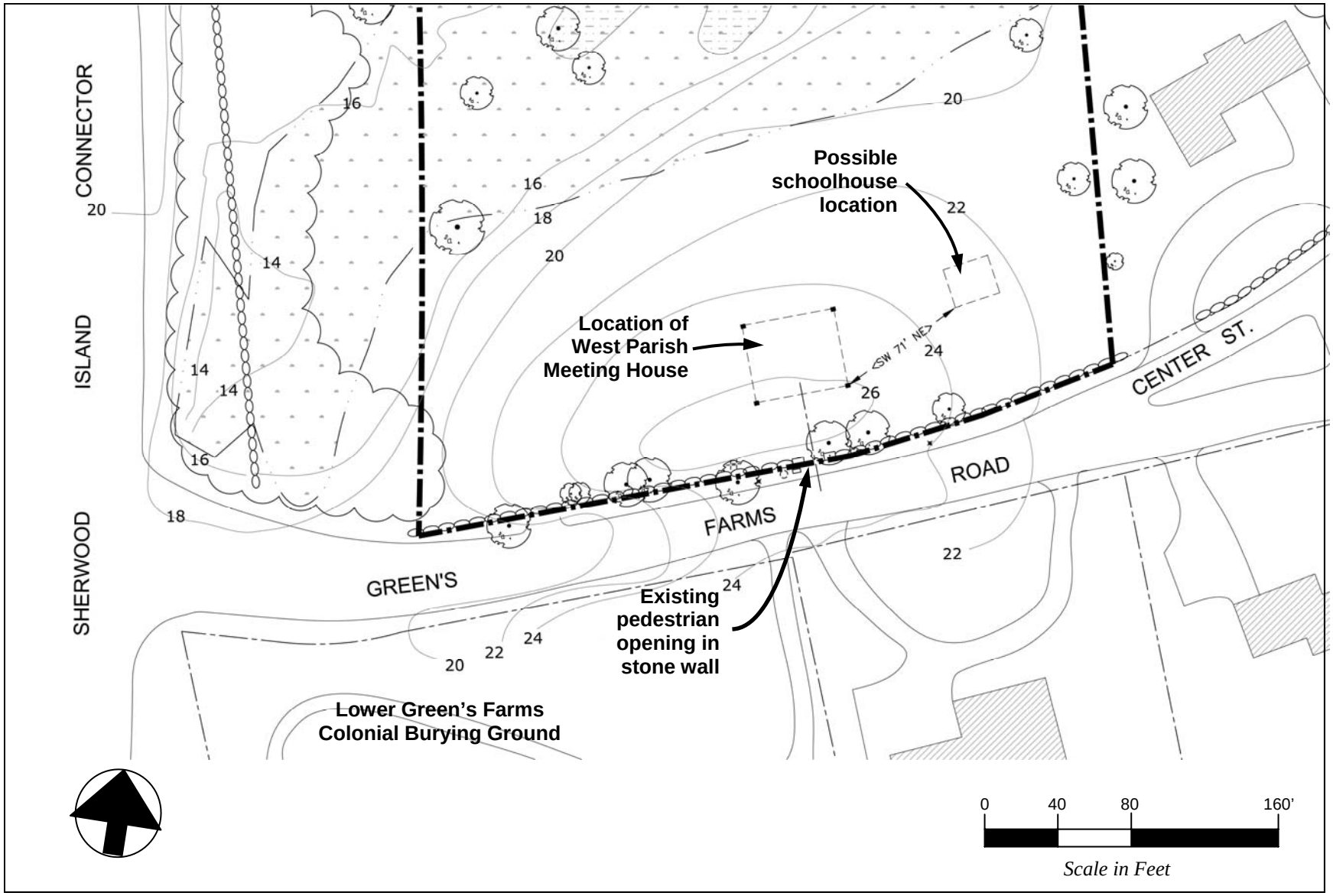
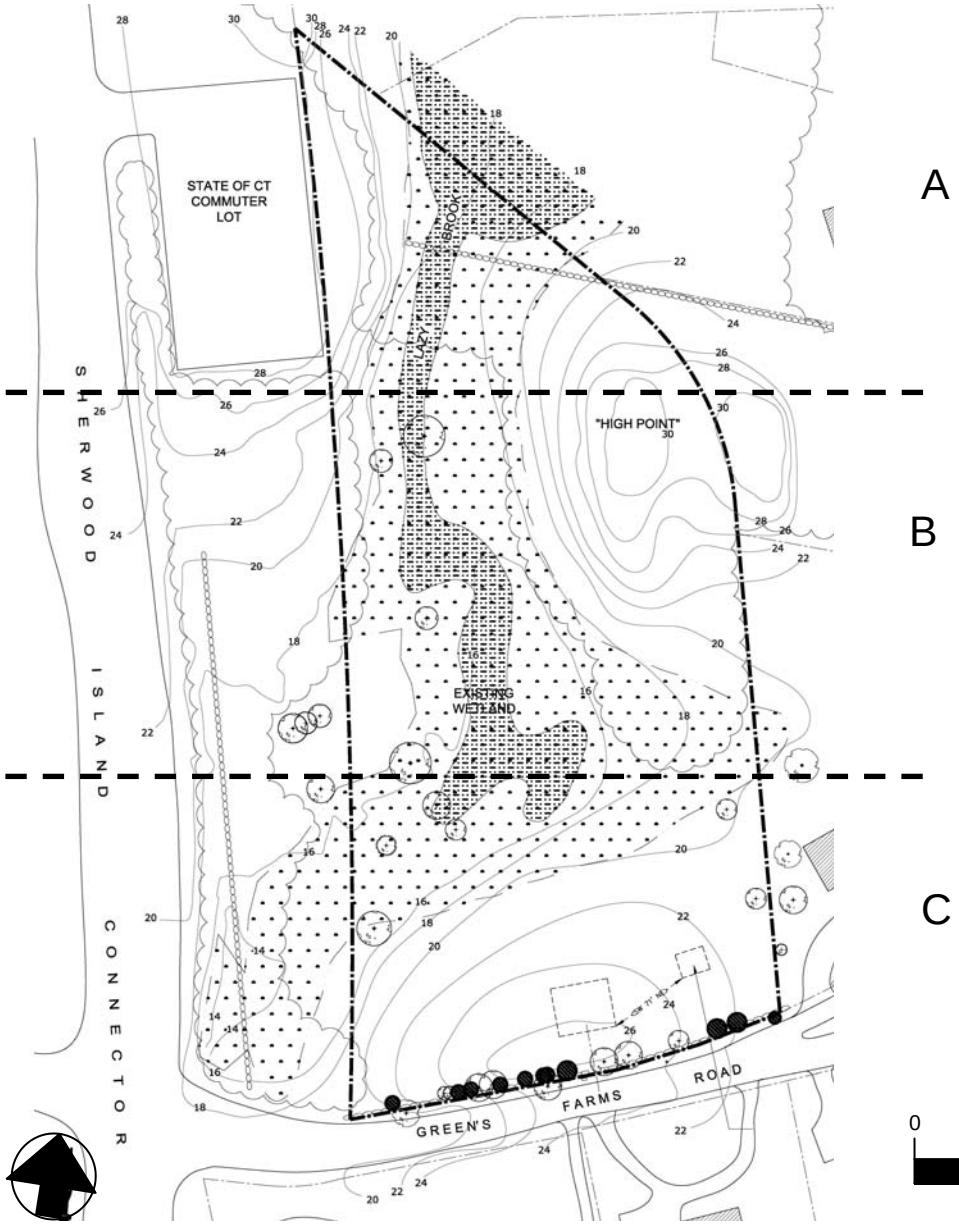


Figure 2-19 Plan of southern portion of project site showing probable locations of the meeting house and schoolhouse.
Source: AutoCAD drawing from composite plan maps (land survey and GIS mapping) provided by Town of Westport.



SECTION KEY

A – Northern third of site

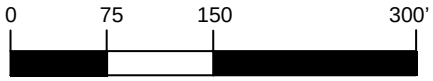
A central wetland area is contained by uplands on west and east. An existing stone wall of unknown period runs east-west. Large boulder outcrops on eastern knoll provides views to the west. A CT DOT commuter parking lot abuts the northwest side.

B – Central third of site

This section is largely wetland, with fringe areas being seasonally wet. The highest point on the project site is situated in the northeastern portion of this section at elevation 30 feet above sea level. This area contains a large number of boulders and rock outcroppings.

C – Southern third of site

This southern third of the property is almost 90% dry meadow vegetation and upland soils. This section is largely flat with a raised knoll within the 22– foot contour line. The significant historic features lie within this portion of the site. The most direct access to the project site is via Green's Farms Road.



Scale in Feet

Figure 3-1 Overview map of project site showing assessment sections. Source: AutoCAD drawing from composite plan maps provided by Town of Westport.

SECTION 3 — PRESERVATION TREATMENT PLAN

TREATMENT GUIDELINES

This section of a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) articulates the preservation strategy for long-term management of the cultural landscape based on its significance, existing conditions and use. This section includes a conceptual design or treatment plan which considers management goals, contemporary use, preservation of natural resources and interpretation. The treatment plan is based on the type of treatment approach or approaches that are most appropriate for the project.

Treatment Approaches

There are four types of treatment approaches defined in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* (1995). Each of the four types has its own specific policies, guidelines and standards. Collectively these treatments form the philosophical basis for preservation practice. The goals and philosophy of any treatment program focus on long-term preservation of a cultural landscape's historic features, qualities and materials.

The four types of treatment approaches are as follows:

- **Preservation:** the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing forms, integrity and material of a historic property.

- **Rehabilitation:** the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural or architectural values.

- **Restoration:** the act or process of accurately depicting the form features and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time.

- **Reconstruction:** the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the forms, features and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building structure or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

The Westport Historic District Commission wishes to preserve the property as a significant historic and archaeological site so the focus of this treatment approach is **Preservation.** The goals of the conceptual design/ treatment plan are preservation of the historic archaeological resources of the site. To accomplish this goal, proposed treatments focus on preserving archaeological resources, preserving natural resources and enhancing the historic context of the site.

The stone wall will be cleared of invasive plant materials and repaired. The date of this wall is unknown so its historic context cannot be established. Proposed repairs will establish a baseline character in keeping with the character of walls found in the area. There are currently four basic "conditions" along the length of the wall; drylaid stone without mortar cap; drylaid stone with cement repair and capping; drylaid stone in disrepair due to construction or damage; sections of wall previously repaired as a result of prior damage (i.e. erection of Connecticut Light & Power (CL&P) utility pole and guy wire on Green's Farms Road). An alternate vehicular entrance will be constructed towards the western end of the wall approximately 60 feet west of the current pedestrian entrance.

The proposed vegetative buffer along the east property line will help to re-establish a view shed within the site that is more in character with a Colonial landscape by screening modern elements. A view shed is the natural environment that is visible from one or more viewing points.

This vegetative buffer provides screening both to and from the abutting residential property. It delineates the historic site perimeter and limits access to the site through the defined pedestrian and vehicular entrances along Green's Farms Road. A portion of the property line will also be delineated on the east side by a wooden split rail fence. Although not historically accurate, the fence in combination with the vegetative buffer will help to define site access so that archaeological resources are not compromised.

To preserve the archaeological resources of the meeting house site, a Conservation Area will be established within the raised knoll in the southern section of the project site. This area encompasses the meeting house location and the possible schoolhouse location. It is defined by tall grass which will be mowed only once per year. To keep mowers from encroaching in this Conservation Area during maintenance mowing of other areas, four native juniper trees will be planted to define each corner. To provide a visual point of reference within the tall grass, the four presumed corners of the meeting house structure will be demarcated by four 26-foot tall posts fabricated of either aluminum or carbon fiber, similar to boat masts. (Figure 3-5) Archaeological investigations will be conducted prior to any penetration of the ground for installation of these posts or any plantings within the project site.

Table 3-1 Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation as applied to the West Parish Meeting House Historic Site

STANDARDS FOR PRESERVATION	APPLICATION TO WEST PARISH MEETING HOUSE HISTORIC SITE
A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces, and relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.	*The property's new use will be for passive recreation (limited walking trails) with limited vehicular access and with carefully managed maintenance practices that minimize impacts to existing archaeological and historic features.*
The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.	*There are no extant historic materials to be repaired. The existing stone wall may be altered to provide vehicular access to the property. The historic period of this stone wall is unknown. The spatial relationship of the stone wall to the site will not change.*
Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented in their future research.	*There will be a Record of Treatment and Record of Maintenance documentation completed for the property. Record of Treatment and Record of Maintenance Forms are provided in the appendix of this report.*
Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.	*The site's relationship to surrounding landscapes will be retained and preserved. Views to interesting natural features will be preserved and enhanced. The spatial relationship to the Lower Green's Farms Colonial Burying Ground on the south side of Green's Farms Road will be maintained.*
Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.	*This standard is not applicable to this site as there are no extant historic features from the meeting house or the schoolhouse.*
The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, new material will match the old in composition, design, color & texture.	*There are no extant historic structures or features that require intervention.*
Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.	*All proposed treatments for the property will adhere to this standard using the gentlest means possible to implement improvements, stabilize site features and maintain the property. Archaeological investigation will proceed any physical sub-surface penetrations.*
Archaeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.	*This standard is the most primary guide for this property since there are archaeological resources that must be preserved. Removal of any invasive plants or physical sub-surface penetrations will be minimized so as to not impact archaeological resources.*

Preservation Goals

The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Preservation and their specific application to the West Parish Meeting House Historic Site are outlined in Table 3-1. In the preservation of this site, the primary goals are:

- Preserve historic archaeological resources.
  - Key archaeological resources are the artifacts of the meeting house, the possible schoolhouse and Native American artifacts. These elements will be preserved within a tall grass Conservation Area which will be mowed only once per year.
- Minimize impacts to historic archaeological and natural resources.
  - Proposed trail improvements should not impact existing wetlands or historic site features.
  - Proposed parking, trail improvements, signage, plantings and historic site demarcations should not impact the subsurface archaeological artifacts
- Provide improved site access to the historic features and to the natural resource features of the site.
  - Safe vehicular access and a pervious (grass) parking area is proposed
  - Proposed trail improvements through wetlands will utilize methods that minimally disturb the existing ecosystem
- Provide interpretive signage which may be used as an educational resource for the community.
  - Interpretive signage will be sited in key locations and will provide information about the site's historic and archaeological significance, natural resources and ecosystems.

Management Philosophy

In developing the treatment plan or conceptual design for the site, consideration has been made for long-term management and general maintenance requirements.

- Manage invasive plants and site mowing.
  - Invasive plants will be removed and will need to be continually monitored.
  - Site mowing will be limited to times of year when ground birds are not nesting.
- Manage community access and use. Community access and use will be managed through:
  - Marked trails that are well defined and that limit access to preservation areas;
  - A parking area that has a pervious surface treatment and is defined by fencing;
  - A Conservation Area defined by tall grass and evergreen trees at each corner;
  - Perimeter barriers (stone wall, buffer plantings, fencing) that limit site access only through proscribed entrances.
- Maintain the site using methods that minimally disturb subsurface archaeological resources.

Treatment Actions

The Treatment Plan/Concept Design is illustrated on plan drawings provided on Figures 3-14,3-15,13-7 and 3-20. These plan drawings show proposed treatment actions for the West Parish Meeting House Historic Site. The various categories of treatment actions for a typical Cultural Landscape Report are based on the preservation goals, the management philosophy and primary treatment approaches for the site. The treatment actions shown on Table 3-2 will guide the proposed conceptual design improvements for the project.

TREATMENT PLAN/CONCEPT DESIGN

Physical Integrity

Maintaining the physical integrity of the cultural landscape is a primary consideration in determining treatment. Unfortunately, there are no truly extant physical qualities or features of the Colonial landscape at the West Parish Meeting House Historic Site. There are documented archaeological artifacts of the meeting house and Native American period to be preserved. These artifacts provide the historic integrity for the site. To maintain this integrity, all proposed uses and improvements are designed to avoid or minimize impacts to subsurface conditions. Prior to any penetration of the ground surface for posts or plantings, more detailed archaeological investigations will be completed.

Balancing Resource Values

Decisions about treatment and maintenance involve balancing both natural and cultural resource values. Potential conflicts between preservation goals and other goals pertaining to other cultural and natural resources should be identified prior to the development of the treatment plan. For this site, the treatment actions and mechanisms for addressing them are outlined in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2 Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties noting treatment actions as they relate to proposed site treatments for the project

TREATMENT ACTION	PROPOSED SITE TREATMENTS
Identify, Retain and Preserve the characteristics, features and qualities that contribute to the significance and integrity of the landscape.	• Key historic characteristics which have been identified and which will be retained and preserved : ▫ Below surface archaeological artifacts of the meeting house and earlier Native American artifacts ▫ Stone walls along property boundaries particularly along Green's Farms Road • Key natural resource characteristics which have been identified and which will be retained and preserved : ▫ Boulder outcroppings ▫ Wetlands
Protect and Maintain the characteristics, features and qualities that are important to the site's significance and integrity.	• Key historic characteristics which have been identified and which will be protected and maintained : ▫ Below surface archaeological artifacts of the meeting house and earlier Native American artifacts. Mowing in this area will be limited to once a year. Archaeological investigations will precede subsurface penetrations. ▫ The meeting house's approximate location will be demarcated by tall posts which are installed subsequent to further archaeological investigation. The probable meeting house and schoolhouse locations will be preserved within a tall grass Conservation Area. ▫ The stone wall will have invasive vines removed. Repairs will be done in keeping with the meeting house period. • Key natural resource characteristics will be protected and appropriately maintained : ▫ A pedestrian trail will be cleared to the boulder outcroppings. Wetland crossings will be restricted to boardwalks
Repair the physical condition of identified characteristics, features and qualities which are in poor condition.	• Existing stone walls will be evaluated by a licensed professional prior to and after invasive plant removal. Areas which have been damaged will be repaired. Sections with mortar or cement should be removed and replaced with dry laid stone Use only stone of color and character that is consistent with the greater percentage of these stones. • Existing vegetation to be retained will be selectively pruned by a licensed arborist.
Replace the characteristic or feature that is in poor condition and cannot be repaired.	• Sections of the stone walls that are in poor condition and cannot be repaired will be replaced
Design for missing features. The new design elements shall be compatible with the character and history of the site.	• The footprint of meeting house will be represented by tall posts located at the presumed corners of the structure. • The area containing the meeting house and schoolhouse will be preserved by tall grass that is mowed only once per year. Interpretive signage will provide information on the meeting house and the history of the project site.
Compatible Alterations and Additions are added to assure continued use. They shall not radically change, obscure or destroy significant historic spatial organization, materials and features.	Additions and alterations to site features which will allow continued use and accessibility to the community include: • Addition of interpretive signage to provide a complete historic experience • Stone wall repair, alteration and addition, as appropriate. • Addition of buffer plantings and fence along east boundary to buffer non-historic elements near the project site. • Alterations to existing vegetation along stone wall at Green's Farms Road to remove invasive vegetation and open up views into the site for visual connection with the Lower Green's Farms Colonial Burying Ground. • Addition of limited trails to overlook area and through wetland areas to provide a more inclusive site experience. • Addition of pervious surface (*Grasspave*™) parking area to facilitate community access to the site.

Biotic Cultural Resources

Within cultural landscapes, plant and animal communities that are associated with human settlement are considered biotic cultural resources. There is limited documentation regarding the condition of the land surrounding the West Parish Meeting House. There is documentation regarding the greater farm community of Green's Farms and the fact that this area was the Bankside Farmer's settlement.

Existing plant and animal communities are the result of centuries of human settlement and development in this area. The existing wetland was most probably part of a larger wetland complex during earlier centuries. It is linked to Lazy Brook and may have been linked to Muddy Brook, which is mentioned in a number of historic texts addressing the Green's Farms community and the Bankside Farmers.

Trails and Pedestrian Access

Visitors would be allowed to freely walk around the southern third of the site with the exception of inside the Conservation Area, which will be maintained in tall grass and only mowed once a year. Trails would initiate at the edges of the open mown meadow in this southern section and would be clearly defined through either mowing, wood chips, or wetland boardwalks. Trail entrances would be demarcated through with interpretive signage.

These trails will be limited to selected area and would be located to minimize impacts to the natural environment. Trail surfaces should be wood chips from on-site tree clearing so that material does not need to be imported to or from the site. Trail routes have been selected to minimize traversing steep slopes, minimize tree and shrub removal and minimize impacts to fragile ecological areas while providing routes that enhance visitor experience.

An overlook area is proposed for the northeast section of the site at the highest point of the property. Selective tree and shrub clearing is suggested for this area (clearing of largely invasive materials) to open up views into the wetland. Interpretive signage or a site brochure will provide information about the geology of this overlook.

Wetland Crossings and Boardwalks

In the interest of wetland preservation and to minimize impacts to plant and wildlife habitats, proposed trails will cross the wetlands at locations that present minimal impact to this ecosystem.

Wetland crossings must be handled carefully and in accordance with state and local regulations. Surface treatments for trails along the wetland fringe may be woodchip or mown-grass. Wood chips will not be used in areas subject to seasonal flooding and will be limited to a depth of 4 inches. Areas with seasonal flooding will be handled via large step stones or wooden boardwalks. (Figures 3-3 and 3-4) The wetland area will need continued monitoring to ensure that invasive species are managed and do not contribute to overgrowth or a reduction in habitat diversity.

The Treatment Plan/Concept Design proposes a boardwalk across the wetland at three locations to provide access around the entire property. This boardwalk would be a simple wooden structure. (Figure 3-2) The support structures are helical piles that can be "drilled" into the earth, thus minimizing wetland disturbance. The boardwalk component can

Figure 3-2. Wooden boardwalk at the Newman-Poses Nature Preserve, Westport, CT

Figure 3-3. Wooden boardwalk in seasonally wet area (Gisland Farm Audubon Center, Falmouth, ME).

Figure 3-4 Large granite step stones through a seasonally wet area (Browning Woods Trail, South Kingstown, RI).

Figure 3-5 Concept view showing proposed 26-ft tall posts demarcating the meeting house location within the tall grass Conservation Area. The tall grass area is defined by native Red Cedar trees at each corner. The proposed Grasspave"™ parking area in the foreground is defined by a cedar post and split-rail fence. An interpretive sign (right side of view) would provide detailed information about the site history.

be prefabricated in small sections that are mounted onto the helical pile framing system. Side railings may be required in the structure's design in order to meet code requirements if the vertical distance from the bridge/boardwalk to the ground is more than 30 inches.

Buffer Plantings and Perimeter Fencing

The plants suggested for buffer plantings may have been found in Colonial gardens. They are all sustainable for a New England climate. The list of shrubs and small trees are easy to maintain, are relatively disease and pest free and most are plants on which deer do not browse. They are suited to the dry gravelly and in some places rocky soil structure of this site. We have suggested a mixed palette of deciduous and evergreen materials to avoid the use of monoculture and to better replicate the diversity in a native New England hedgerow. This listing also provides sufficient year-round berries for birds and other smaller mammals thus contributing to sustaining habitat and ecosystem diversity for the site. These buffer plantings will be used in conjunction with a split rail cedar fence along the eastern boundary to ensure limited access to the project site. Figure 3-12 provides a concept view of these buffer plantings.

Botanical Name	Common Name
Abies balsamea	Balsam Fir
Acer negundo	Box Elder
Alnus rugosa	Alder
Aronia arbutifolia	Red Chokeberry
Calycanthus floridus	Sweetshrub
Ilex glabra	Inkberry
Ilex opaca	American Holly
Juniperus virginiana	Native Red Cedar
Pinus strobus	White Pine
Pinus virginiana	Virginia Scrub Pine
Rhus aromatica	Sumac
Spirea tomentosa	Spirea
Viburnum acerifolium	Maple Leaf Viburnum
Viburnum cassinoides	Witherod Viburnum
Viburnum lentago	Nannyberry
Viburnum prunifolium	Blackhaw Viburnum
Vitex agnus-castus	Chaste Tree

Table 3-3 Suggested buffer plantings.

Landscape Use and Ethnographic Value

The historic land use for community ceremony, celebration and government makes this site significant. Congregational churches and meeting houses served as the primary location for community government and celebration as well as worship until the separation of church and state in 1818.

Significant landscape uses and ethnographic values are subtle but still evident at this site. These are the archaeological artifacts of the West Parish Meeting House and Native American camps. Preservation of the open meadow provides an opportunity for visitors to experience views and vistas to wetland landscapes that may have been present in Colonial times. The open meadow also provides an experience similar in character to landscapes during the time of earlier farming communities.

To interpret both landscape use and ethnographic components for this site, the proposed treatments include installation of 26-foot tall posts to demarcate the four corners of the meeting house site. A Conservation Area of tall meadow grass that is mowed once a year will "preserve" the locations of the meeting house, Native American artifacts and the possible schoolhouse. The tall grass in this

Figure 3-6 A section of existing stone wall along Green's Farms Road in good condition.

Figure 3-7 A section of existing stone wall requiring repair.

Fig. 3-8 The Lower Green's Farms Colonial Burying Ground provides an example of stone wall restoration.

Conservation Area mitigates compaction of soils through mowing limited to once per year as well as by limiting pedestrian access to areas outside of these key archaeological resources. Figure 3-5 provides a conceptual rendering of this area.

Stone Walls

Maintaining and restoring the existing stone wall and the visual and physical relationship of this site to the Lower Green's Farms Colonial Burying Ground across Green's Farms Road provides a spatial element that reinforces the cultural landscape character. Stone wall reconstruction should be done carefully. The initial step involves removal of invasive plant material. Once all vines and plants have been removed, the wall should be photographed from both sides to obtain a visual record of its character and construction. An analysis should then be made as to which sections to rebuild completely and which sections to repair. Figures 3-6 through 3-8 illustrate various existing conditions of stone walls along Green's Farms Road.

RECORD OF TREATMENT

Implementation of the conceptual design will need to be done in phases as funding allows. A Record of Treatment should be followed to ensure that implementation is completed appropriately. A Record of Treatment also provides documentation of any changes that are made between the proposed treatment plan and the actual treatments that are implemented. A sample Record of Treatment Form is provided in the Appendices section of this report.

For implementation of the conceptual design, phased work actions are recommended based on a logical sequence of construction, (i.e. removal of invasive plants prior to stone wall repair) required permitting procedures and projected costs. Table 3-4 provides a summary of the treatment actions, the projected cost for that treatment action, the proposed phase for implementation and the agencies or parties who might be responsible for the action. This project will require implementation over a number of years. It will also require the a collaborative effort on the part of town departments and funding agencies. Consideration should be given to a collaborative effort with local land trusts for some of the long term maintenance work.

In a formal cultural landscape report (CLR) the Record of Treatment does not document preservation maintenance. However, for the purposes of this project, we have provided a Record of Maintenance Form in addition to the Record of Treatment Form. A sample Record of Maintenance Form is provided in the Appendices section of this report. It is strongly advised that preservation maintenance work be recorded to ensure that maintenance practices adhere to the treatment goals for this project.

PROJECTED COSTS

The projected costs for implementation of this project are also provided on Table 3-4. These costs are "ballpark" or approximate estimates and are provided based on the following units:

- LF– linear foot
- SF– square foot
- SFF—square foot face of stone wall
- SY - square yard

Overall a project of this scope could require a minimum of $275,000 to $350,000 to complete all of the proposed treatments and improvements in the southern section of the project site which contains the elements of most historic significance. This southern section (Section C on related map keys) requires the most work with respect to preserving the historic character and archaeological resources, providing interpretive signage, providing safe and appropriate site access and securing the site from non-proscribed access.

As more detailed plans are developed for the various design elements, more precise cost estimates should be developed.

RESPONSIBLE AGENCY OR PARTY

Table 3-4 also provides recommendations for the responsible agency or party who would implement the treatment action. In all aspects of the work, qualified professionals should be involved. With certain treatment actions such as removal of invasive plants or pruning and removal of dead or diseased trees, a licensed landscape professional or licensed arborist should perform the work.

Volunteers who are competent and qualified to assist with actions such as management or removal of invasive plants, should be supervised by qualified professionals and should sign waivers of liability with the town prior to initiating any work.

In early discussions with the HDC, suggestions were made regarding the involvement of local land trusts to assist with maintenance work such as selective clearing, trail maintenance and invasive plant management. The HDC could pursue discussions with land trusts and include representatives from town departments to develop a plan of action.

Table 3-4 Treatment actions by phase, noting projected costs and responsible agency or party

TREATMENT ACTION	PHASE	PROJECTED COST	RESPONSIBLE AGENCY/PARTY
Remove invasive plants within project site, starting with stone wall along Green's Farms Road.	*1*	$ 20-40 /LF	*Licensed contractor*
Remove dead or diseased trees along Green's Farms Road. Prune remaining trees as required.	*1*	$1,000 to remove; $500+ to prune	*Licensed arborist*
Repair stone wall and construct entrance for vehicular access to site	*1*	$150-250 / Sq. Foot Face	*Qualified stone masonry contractor*
Preparation of pervious parking area in Grasspave™ surface. Add fencing and buffer plantings to define parking area.	*2*	$200 /SY Grasspave; $50 /LF fence	*Town DPW and landscape contractor*
Installation of fence along southern portion of east boundary followed by planting of vegetative buffer.	*2*	$75-200/LF buffer; $50/LF fence	*Landscape contractor*
Archaeological test holes around meeting house footprint perimeter at locations of proposed tall posts and four corners of Conservation Area.	*3*	$300-$500/ test hole	*Archaeological consultant*
Install tall posts at presumed corners of meeting house structure and plant juniper trees at four corners of Conservation Area.	*3*	$5,000 min /post	*Landscape contractor and fabricator for tall posts*
Phased installation of interpretive signage at key locations: entrance, meeting house site, trail entrance, northeast overlook.	*3*	$1,000 / sign	*Design by outside consultant; installation by Town Parks and Recreation*
Selective clearing of trail to northeast overlook.	*4*	$4,500 and up	*Town DPW, land trusts, outside contractor or qualified volunteers*
Installation of boardwalk areas along trail to northeast overlook, subsequent to Conservation Department and Commission approval.	*4*	$75 /LF	*Outside contractor or qualified volunteers. Conservation Department approval*
Selective clearing of trail along west side of project site.	*4*	$1,000 and up	*Town DPW, land trusts, outside contractor or qualified volunteers*
Installation of required boardwalk areas along west side of project site subsequent to Conservation Department and Commission approval.	*4*	$75 -$120/ LF	*Outside contractor or qualified volunteers. Conservation Department approval.*
Removal of invasive plants in wetland areas along with permit approvals via Conservation Department and Commission. Restore native species.	*4*	$200-400/ SY	*Conservation Department approval. Licensed wetland mitigation firm*
Overseed Conservation Area with meadow seed mix.	*5*	$200-400/ SY	*Town DPW or landscape contractor*

Table 3-5 Possible treatment conflict or issue and suggested mechanism to address

Possible Conflict or Issue	Mechanism to Address
Provide access to West Parish Meeting House Historic Site while preserving archaeological resources underground.	*Provide Conservation Area that is defined by a meadow of tall native grasses and forbs. Meadow planting will deter people from walking into the immediate footprint of the meeting house. Herbaceous material will not penetrate deeply into soil. Meadow grass will be mowed once or twice a year to minimize compaction on archaeological resources. Define meeting house location within Conservation Area with tall posts to indicate corners of structure.*
Provide buffer plantings and fencing to delineate public/private property lines; screen modern elements within the site's view shed and limit access to the site while minimizing impacts on archaeological resources.	*Provide buffer plantings that require minimal care, are sustainable and that are compatible with the historic period of the meeting house. Install fencing along part of the east property line to secure site access. Plantings and fencing to be located so as not to impact archaeological resources.*
Provide trails that allow access to a variety of site experiences without adversely impacting historic and natural resources	*Pedestrian foot traffic will be allowed everywhere but over designated Conservation Area. Trails through wetlands will be located to minimize impact to natural resources. Prefabricated bridges with helical piles to be used in selected areas.*
Provide safe vehicular access and parking for a minimal number of site visitors while minimizing impacts to historic and natural resources	*There is no existing parking at the site. Proposed parking to be limited to vehicular auto spaces (no buses or large vehicles) and to be on pervious surface. Parking is located away from Conservation Area to mitigate impacts to archaeological resources. Entrance is located within acceptable site distances from intersection and hill.*
Remove invasive plant materials from site while minimally impacting existing site features.	*Invasive plants must be carefully removed from both the wetland area and from the stone wall. Use Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the State of Connecticut, Department of Environmental Protection (CT DEP) approved methods for removal of all invasive materials. Carefully remove plants from stone wall to minimize shifts in stone. Continue to monitor and manage invasive plants. Replace massings of invasive shrubs with native material, keep stone wall clear of plantings to maintain wall integrity.*

INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION

Inclusion of interpretive signage is one of the primary goals for this project. The Westport Historic District Commission would like to have the site utilized by area schools as an educational resource in addition to providing information to the casual site visitor. The design team has indicated appropriate locations for interpretive signage on the concept design/treatment plan.

This signage focuses on providing information as follows:

1. Entrance sign denoting the site name and dates.
2. Meeting House Interpretive sign showing archaeological information, locations of meeting house and possible schoolhouse and describing historic significance of the site.
3. Wetland trail sign describing the existing condition of the wetland, its ecological importance and illustrating flora, fauna and habitats.
4. Overlook sign at top of northeast knoll describing current view, soils for the area and projecting possible historic views.
5. Boardwalk trail sign describing the engineering of the helical pile construction and how this construction preserves wetland resources.

It is recommended that interpretive signage be constructed of durable materials that are easy to maintain and that are also composed from sustainable resources. Signage posts can be fabricated from carbonite to mirror the materials of the tall posts at the meeting house corners or of naturally insect-resistant cedar wood. Cedar posts may have a preservative coating applied along the inground segments to provide additional resistance to decay. Sign panels may be constructed of a fiberglass resin material which has a 15-20 year life-span or of polycarbonate which is more costly but has a longer lifespan, higher resistance to UV rays and is more durable to wear. For both materials, graphics are usually factory imbedded into the sign panel.

Refer to Figures 3-9 and 3-10 for images of recommended interpretive signage styles.

The town and the HDC should also consider the installation of small, discreetly located "regulation" signs which address the following:

- Historic site is closed from dusk to dawn
- Dogs must remain on a leash. Please pick up after your dog.
- Do not remove any plants or animals from this site. Please remove your trash and leave only footprints.
- Disturbing archaeological resources may result in prosecution by the State of Connecticut.

In addition, information about the site could be made available via town website, brochure or via coded cell phone access.

SUSTAINABILITY

Cultural landscape preservation has always been mindful of using treatments that are sustainable and easy to maintain due to limited budgets available to most historic organizations and municipalities.
The Treatment Plan/Concept Design for the West Parish Meeting House site suggests treatments that minimally impact the existing historic and natural resources. These treatments also meet a number of

Fig. 3-9 Example of a trail head sign at the Browning Woods Trail, South Kingstown, RI.

Fig. 3-10 Example of an interpretive sign along the Browning Woods Trail , South Kingston, RI.

ANNUAL RECOMMENDED MAINTENANCE TASK	ESTIMATED COST (ANNUAL)	POSSIBLE RESPONSIBLE PARTY
December through end of February — No active maintenance required.	$0	HDC to review long range goals in relation to recent improvements.
Early March through early April — Remove dead branches and debris from winter storms.	$1,500 or more depending on damage	Local land trust and/or Town Department of Public Works.
April through late July/early August — Keep grass mowed in meadow areas to be used for walking, trails and parking. Repair trail sections and signage as necessary.	$1,000 or more depending on repair needs	Local land trust, Town Department of Public Works or landscaping contractor.
September — Check for growth of invasive plant material along stone wall and trails. Manage new invasive growth through removal and appropriate herbicide treatment.	$1,500 or more depending on removal requirements	HDC in conjunction with licensed contractor.
October through November — Remove leaves from fringe areas within meadow area. Mow Conservation Area only after late summer monarch butterfly migration is past, check with local Audubon Society for clearance on mowing.	$2,000 or more depending on removal requirements	Landscaping contractor.
Every 5 years —- Consult arborist regarding condition of existing trees and determine need for pruning or removal. Evaluate condition of trails; shift locations if pedestrian use is causing significant erosion or compaction.	$2,000 or more depending on removal requirements. Estimate $600 per tree for pruning. $1,000 or more for tree removal	Local land trust in conjunction with HDC; hire arborist and landscaping contractor.

Table 3-6. Outline of recommended annual maintenance tasks.

LEED (Leadership in Energy Efficient Design) principles as well as guidelines for Sustainable Sites (SITES) which were developed by the American Society of Landscape Architects in collaboration with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas (Austin) and The National Botanic Garden. On Table 3-7 we have outlined the proposed treatment and shown how that treatment meets both LEED and Sustainable Sites criteria.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Alterations to any cultural landscape must comply with the latest health and safety codes. When alterations are required, they need to be designed so that they minimize the loss of historic features and qualities, minimize damage to archaeological and natural resources and so that they maintain historic integrity.

At this site, access to the parking area must be located at least 75 feet from the intersection of the Sherwood Island Connector and Green's Farms Road. In creating a safe access to the parking area, sight lines along Green's Farms Road must be clear for cars entering and exiting the parking area. The new break through the stone wall, which provides access to this parking area, must be made in a location that is clear of utility poles, guy wires and existing trees.

New trails from the meadow to the overlook on the northeast knoll will minimize impacts to the existing wetlands. New buffer plantings along the east side of the property will provide privacy for the abutting land owners as well as security for the project site. This buffer utilizes vegetation native to the area. The vegetation is sustainable (drought tolerant and pest and disease resistant) and is located outside the Conservation Area to minimally impact underground archaeological resources. The buffer along with the fence also serves to limit access to the site through clearly defined entrances.

MAINTENANCE

Maintenance and sustainability are critical to the long-term management of a cultural landscape. If the site is not maintained properly or if the maintenance is not "sustainable," the landscape will lose its historic integrity.

One of the primary goals for this site as outlined by the Historic District Commission is the development of a Maintenance Program. Some key considerations in the development of this program are:

- Are existing maintenance practices sufficient to appropriately maintain the proposed treatment and improvements?
- Who shall assume responsibility in the maintenance of the site?
- Can collaborative efforts be developed?
- Will there be sufficient funds budgeted for maintenance?

Table 3-6 outlines the yearly maintenance tasks by month and indicates the approximate costs as well as suggesting collaborative efforts.

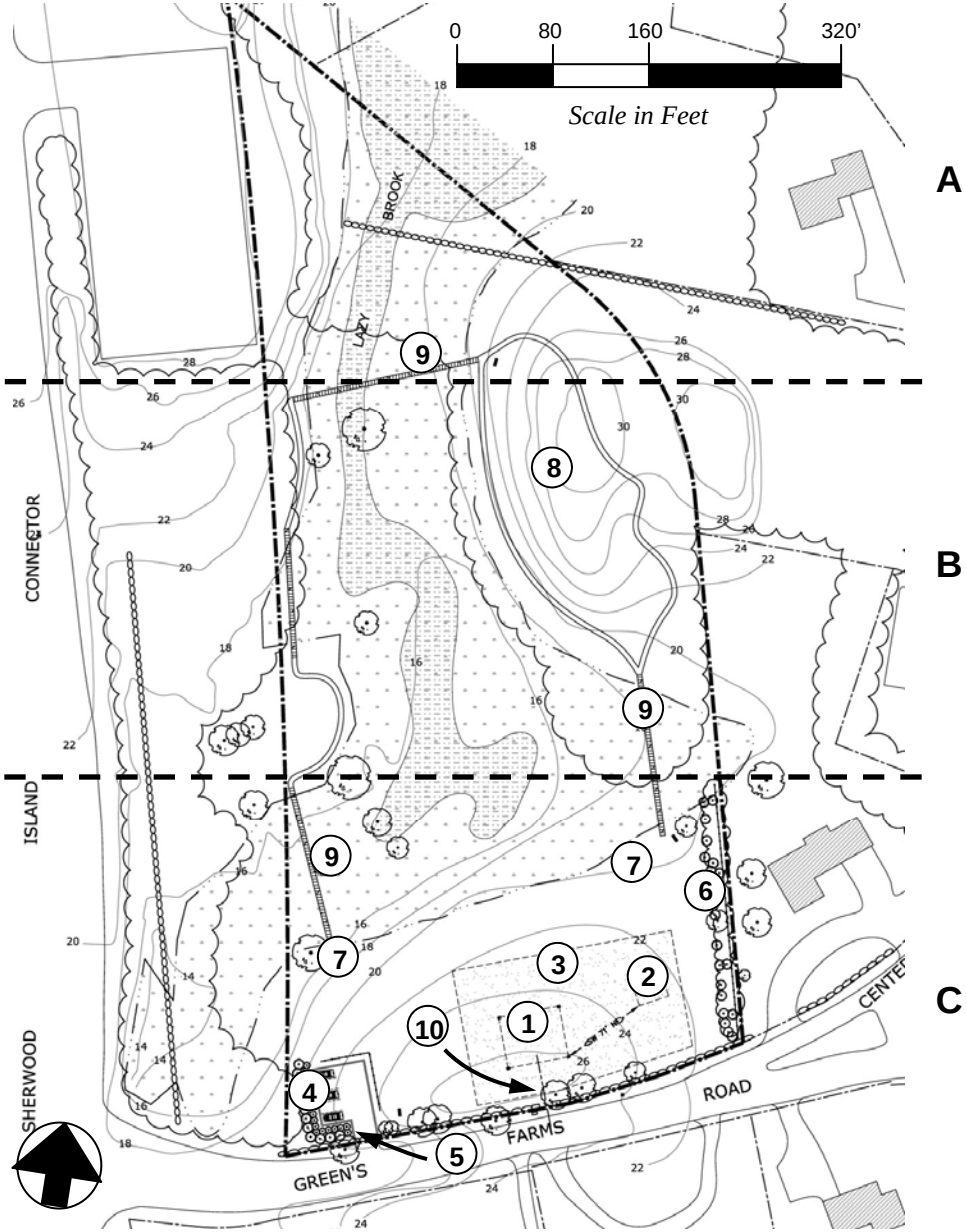
Figure 3-11 The tall grass Conservation Area at left with temporary stake noting corner.

Figure 3-12 Invasive phragmites should be removed to maintain wetland biodiversity.

Fig. 3-13 Invasive vines should be removed from the stone walls.

PROPOSED TREATMENT	LEED CRITERIA	SUSTAINABLE SITES CRITERIA
Remove invasive plants from wetland and restore habitat with native plantings.	SSC5.1 Site development, Protect or Restore Habitat	Protect floodplain function; preserve wetlands; preserve habitat; control and manage invasive plants.
Maintain pervious surfaces within project site. Use native meadow grasses, wildflowers and forbes; maintain open space.	SSC5.1 Site development, Protect or Restore Habitat; SSC5.2 Site Development Maximize Open Space	Protect floodplain function; preserve habitat; provide outdoor spaces for social interaction; provide views of vegetation and quiet outdoor areas.
Add buffer screening along eastern property line comprised of native trees and shrubs.	SSC5.1 Site development, Protect or Restore Habitat; SSC7.1 Heat Island Effect, non-roof	Protect floodplain function; preserve habitat; reuse plant communities native to ecosystem.
Use locally available FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified wood for boardwalks and fencing.	Use certified wood and regional materials	Use certified wood; Use regional materials.
Remove invasive plants along stone wall and repair stone wall using local native stone.	SSC5.1 Site development, Protect or Restore Habitat	Control and manage invasive plants.
No lighting for night use of site. Install interpretive signs for education.	SSC8 Light pollution reduction	Promote sustainability awareness and education.
Use pervious grass surface for parking area. Use wood chippings from site tree removals for trail surfaces.	SSC7.1 Heat Island Effect, non-roof	Protect floodplain function; manage storm water; recycle organic matter during maintenance operations.

Table 3-7 Compatibility of Proposed Treatments with US Green Building Council Leadership in Energy Efficient Design (LEED) guidelines and American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) SITES Sustainable Sites criteria.



KEY

A – Northern third of site – A central wetland area is contained by uplands on west and east. An existing stone wall of unknown period runs east-west. Large boulder outcrops on eastern knoll provides views to the west. A CT DOT commuter parking lot abuts the northwest side.

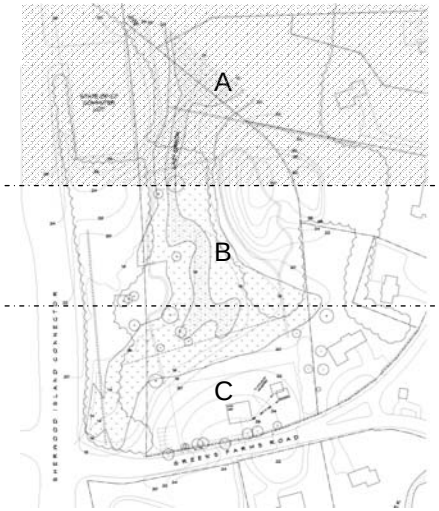
B – Central third of site – This section is largely wetland, with fringe areas being seasonally wet. The Concept Design/Treatment Plan proposes limited trails and boardwalk through selected sections of wetland to provide passive recreation and an educational experience for visitors.

C – Southern third of site – This southern third of the property is almost 90% dry meadow vegetation and upland soils. The significant historic features lie within this portion of the site.

LEGEND

1. Site of the historic West Parish Meeting House
2. Site of possible Colonial schoolhouse
3. Proposed archaeological Conservation Area
4. Proposed parking area
5. Proposed vehicular entrance
6. Proposed vegetative buffer and fence
7. Proposed entrance to trails
8. Northeastern knoll with proposed trails and overlook
9. Proposed Wetland crossings
10. Existing pedestrian entrance at stone wall

Figure 3-14 Overview map of proposed Treatment Plan/Concept Design. Source: AutoCAD drawing from composite plan maps by Town of Westport.



A – Northern third of site

A central wetland area is contained by uplands on west and east. An existing stone wall of unknown period runs east-west. Large boulder outcrops on eastern knoll provides views to the west. A Connecticut DOT commuter parking lot abuts the northwest side.

Legend

1. Connecticut DOT commuter parking lot
2. Existing stone wall
3. Proposed wetland boardwalk
4. Proposed trail to high point/knoll

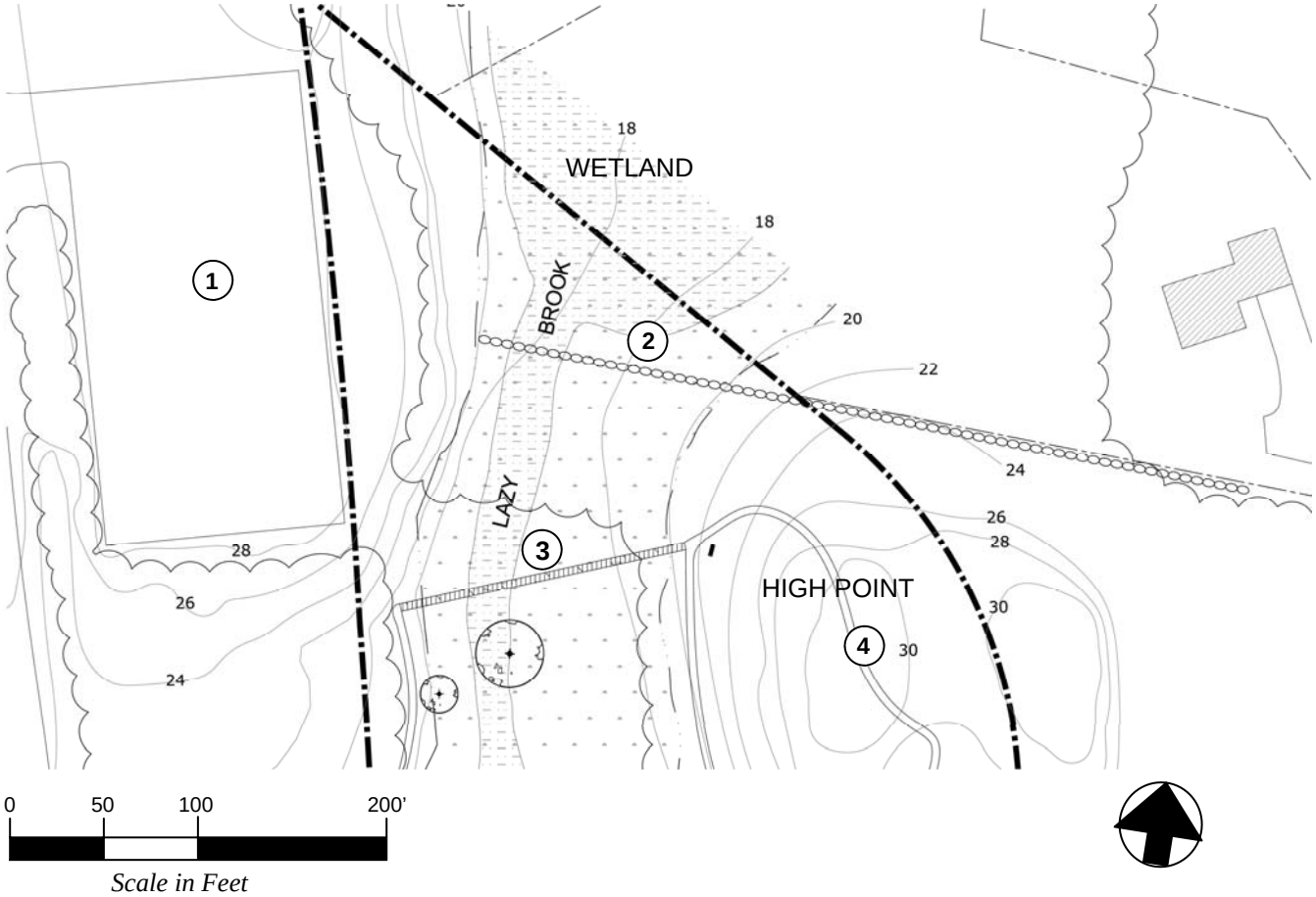
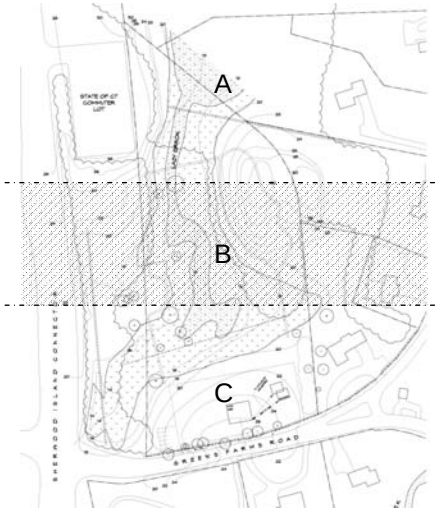


Figure 3-15 Treatment Plan/Concept Design for northern section of project site. Source: AutoCAD drawing from composite plan maps provided by Town of Westport.

Figure 3-16 Rock outcrops at high point/knoll in northeastern part of the project site.

Figure 3-17 Stone walls that run through the woodlands in the northern part of the project site.



B – Central third of site

This section is largely wetland, with fringe areas being seasonally wet. The Concept Design/ Treatment Plan proposes limited trails and boardwalk through selected sections of wetland to provide passive recreation and an educational experience for visitors.

Legend

1. Existing wetland
2. Existing stone wall
3. Proposed wetland boardwalk
4. Proposed trail to high point/knoll

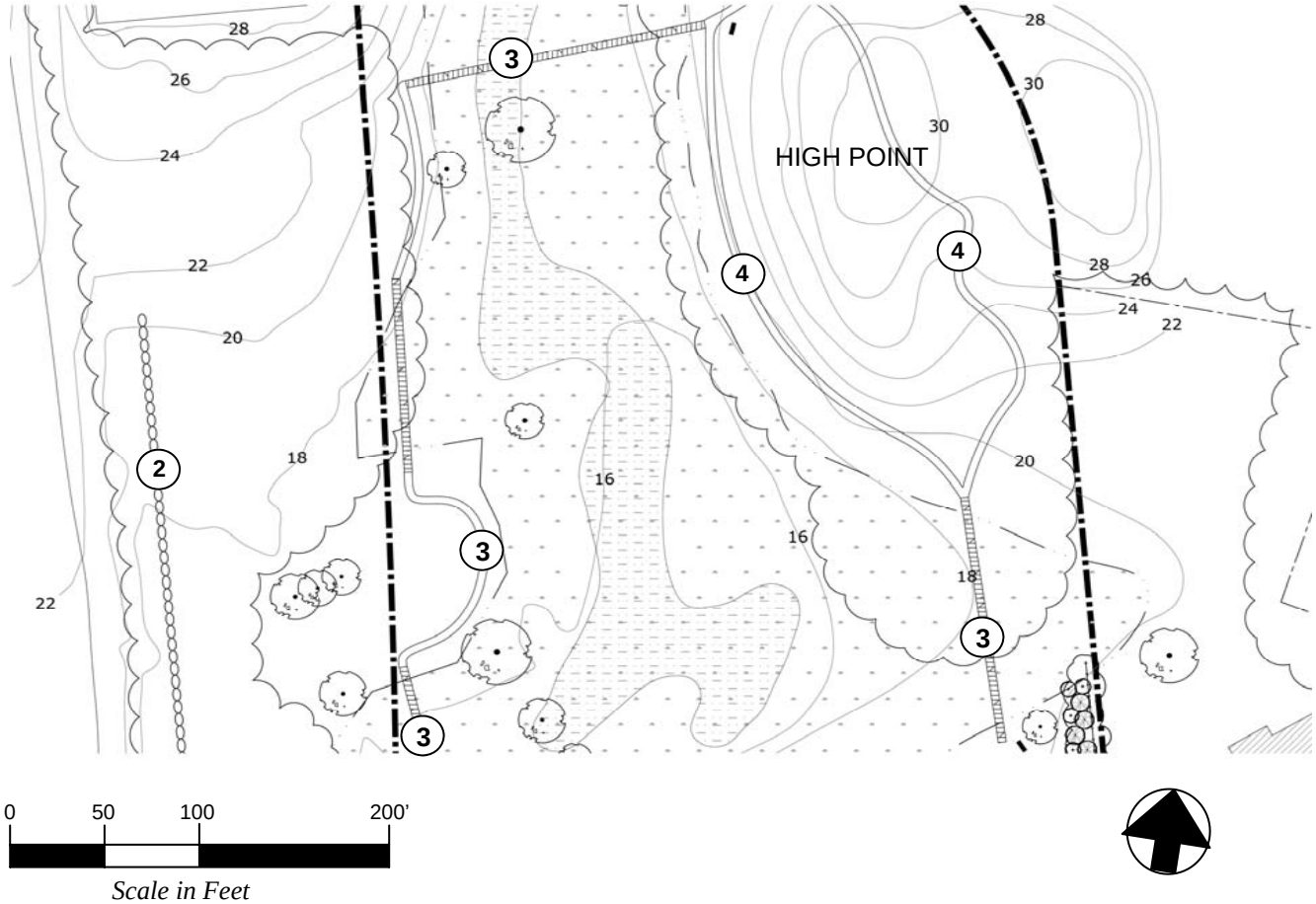
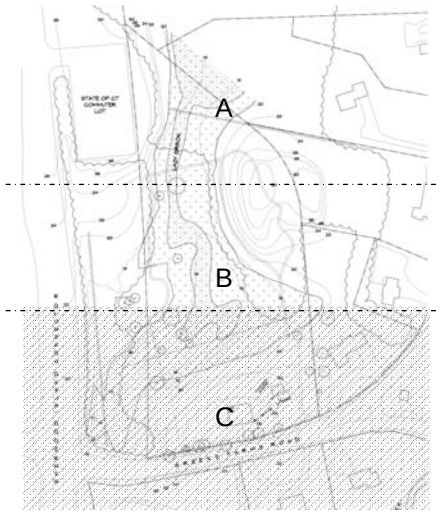


Figure 3-18 Treatment Plan/Concept Design for central section of project site. Source: AutoCAD drawing from composite plan maps provided by Town of Westport.

Figure 3-19 Concept view showing proposed entrance to wetland boardwalk trail with interpretive sign.



C – Southern third of site

This southern third of the property is almost 90% dry meadow vegetation and upland soils. The significant historic features and the focus of the Treatment Plan/Concept Design work lie within this portion of the site.

Legend

1. Meeting House location
2. Possible location for schoolhouse
3. Existing pedestrian entrance in stone wall
4. Proposed parking area
5. Proposed vehicular entrance
6. Proposed vegetative buffer
7. Proposed trail entrance to high point/knoll
8. Proposed trail from wetland
9. Proposed Conservation Area of tall grasses, forbes, and native wild flowers
10. Existing entrance to the Lower Green's Farms Colonial Burying

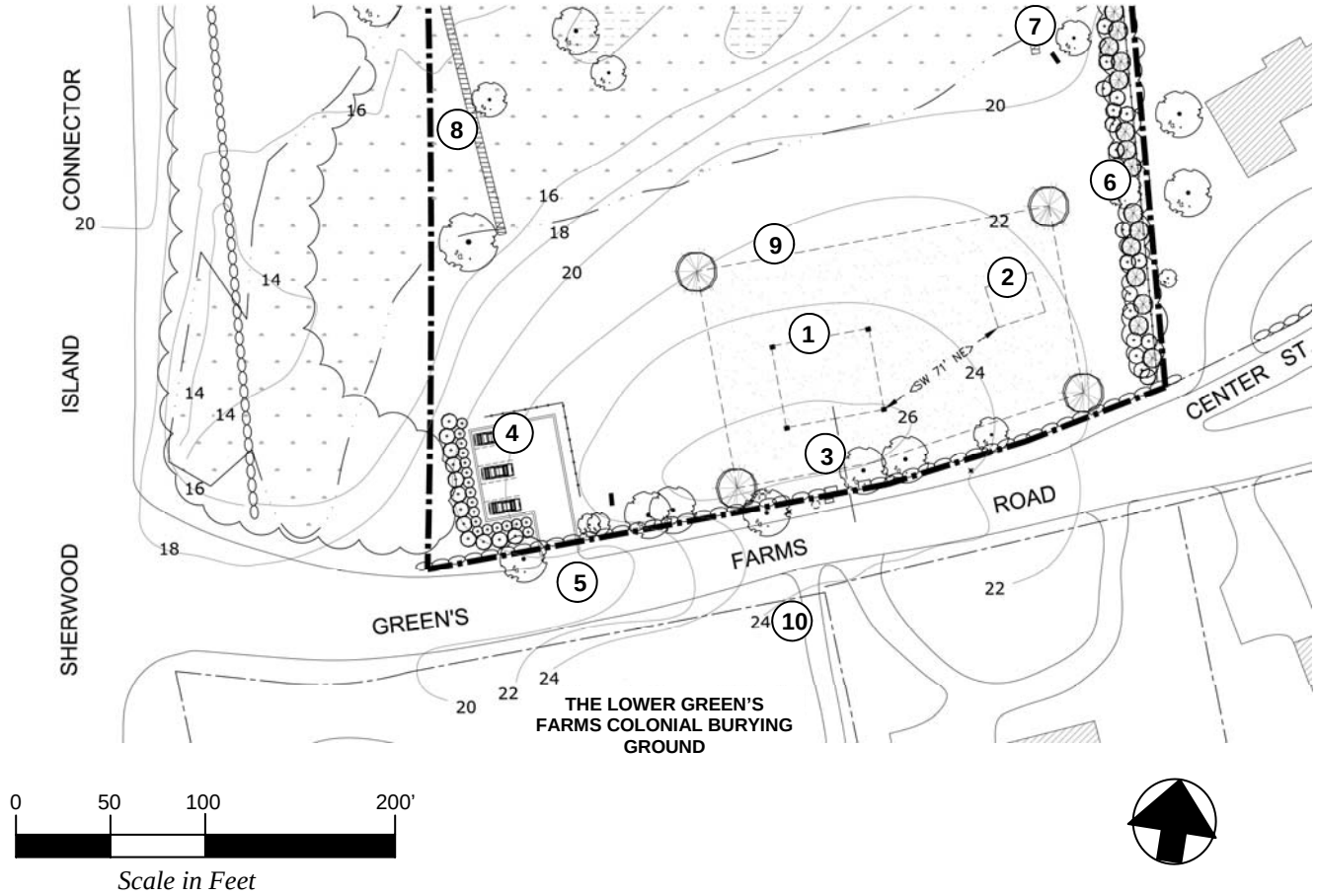
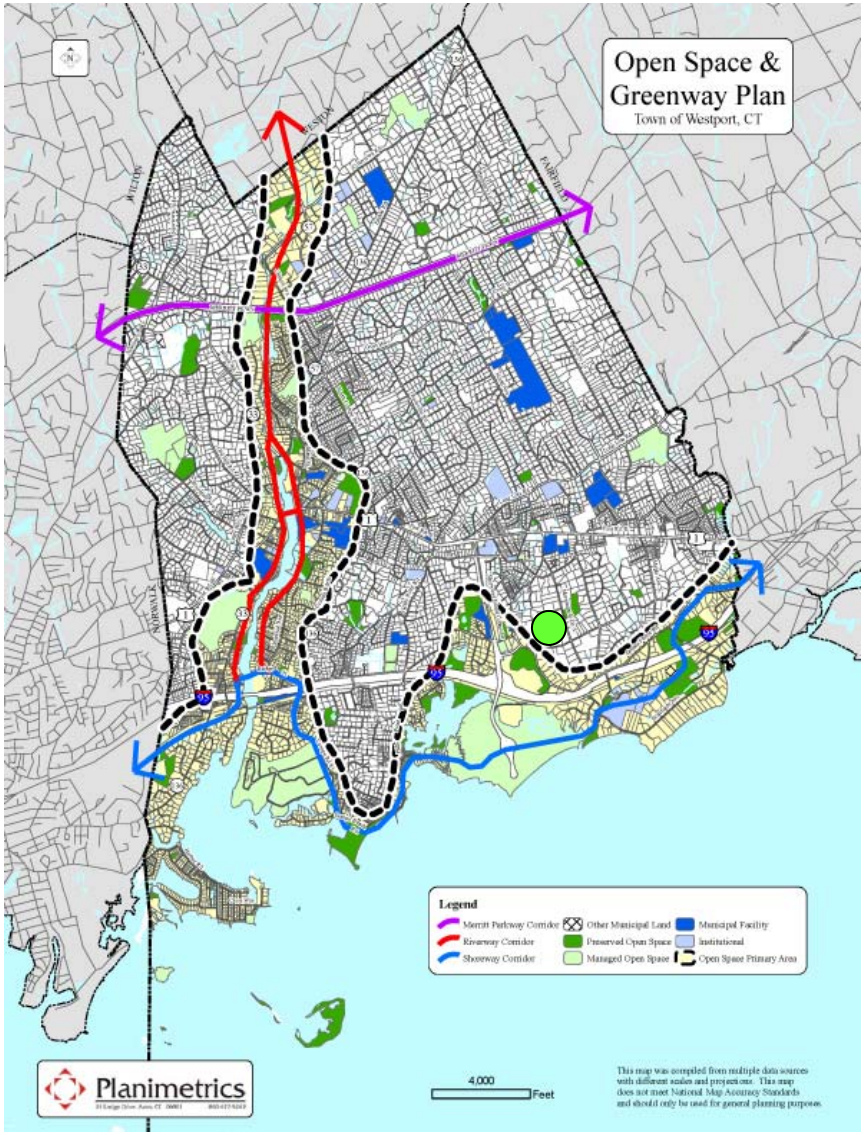


Figure 3-20 Treatment Plan showing southern section of the project site. Source: AutoCAD drawing from composite plan maps provided by Town of Westport.

Figure 3-21 Concept view showing proposed buffer plantings (proposed post and split-rail fence in background) to screen and secure the eastern property line.



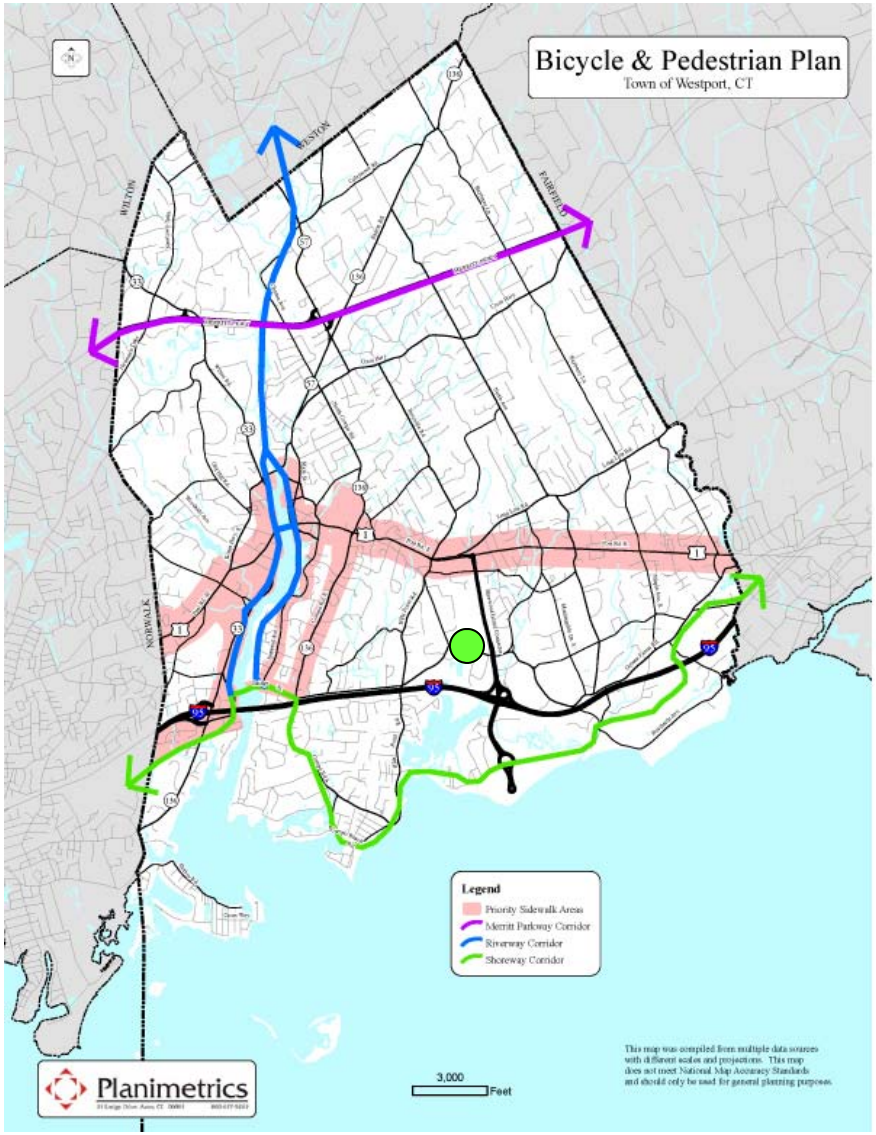


Fig 4-1 Maps from 2007 Westport Plan of Conservation and Development showing the Open Space & Greenway Path and the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan. Green circle on each map denotes the West Parish Meeting House Historic Site.

SECTION 4 — IMPLEMENTATION

OVERVIEW

Implementation of this project will require more detailed design work, state and local permitting approvals, traffic access approvals, fundraising initiatives and community involvement. The challenge will be to maintain the preservation goals for this site throughout future planning and design processes. This work may require many years of focus to attain the proposed Treatment Plan/Concept Design illustrated in this report.

Projects such as this can be key components in any "Smartgrowth" plan for a community, providing a means of passive recreation, a place for an outdoor educational experience and a venue for community interaction.

We have reviewed the town's most recent 2007 Plan of Conservation and Development (POCD) and see a potential for having the West Parish Meeting House Historic Site become a stop in the proposed recreational bikeway system. The site is already recognized as passive open space and as an historic site in the POCD Open Space and Greenway Plan.

The success of this project will depend both on funding and community support. Concerns by neighboring property owners regarding loss of privacy and security are important issues that can be appropriately addressed through design treatments of vegetation buffers and fencing as suggested in the treatment plan. The site will not have lighting to deter nocturnal use. Pedestrian access will be limited to the existing opening in the stone wall along Green's Farms Road while vehicular traffic is provided to a small 5-car parking area approximately 275 feet from the signaled intersection of Green's Farms Road and the Sherwood Island Connector.

PHASING

We have suggested a phasing of the proposed work on Table 3-6. The suggested phasing is based on the following criteria:

- Treatments which provide immediate preservation of the archaeological resources
- Treatments which address the problem of invasive plant species, particularly where plants are compromising the integrity of the stone wall
- Treatments that follow a logical sequence for construction
- Treatments that provide access and use of the southern portion of the site in the initial phases of implementation

Availability of funding, town support services and supervised volunteer labor will also be a factor in project implementation. It may be possible to have members of a land trust along with qualified volunteers assist with the removal of invasive plant materials in areas that are easily accessible. This work should be done under appropriate supervision and with the necessary liability waivers. The more labor-intensive plant removals such as tree pruning, removal of vines from trees and management of invasive phragmites should be handled by qualified licensed professionals.

Throughout the implementation work, a record of completed treatments should be maintained on file at the office of the HDC Staff Administrator.

Fig. 4-2 Invasive crown vetch.

Fig. 4-3 The Lower Green's Farms Colonial Burying Ground

Fig. 4-4 View across southern portion of the project site.

PERMITTING & MUNICIPAL REVIEWS

To implement this project, a number of town and state permits and reviews will need to be completed.

Conservation Department
The Regulations for the Protection and Preservation of Wetlands and Watercourses and the Waterway Protection Line Ordinance (WPLO) are posted on the town website under the Conservation Department heading. Detailed guidelines are provided for submission of a permit application to be heard before the Conservation Commission during a public hearing. A preliminary review with the Conservation Department Director should be scheduled prior to any detailed design work. The Conservation Commission has jurisdiction over any work within twenty (20) feet of a delineated wetland edge. Recommended procedures for wetland permit approvals for this project would reference town wetland Map F7 and would be as follows:

- Preliminary review of work with Conservation Department.
- Verification of wetland edge by Connecticut Certified Soil Scientist and topographic survey by a registered land surveyor to confirm location of that edge. Preparation of a survey for a wetland boundary map amendment, if necessary.
- Preparation of drawings for proposed construction work and preparation of an application before the Conservation Commission pursuant to the Regulations for the Protection and Preservation of Wetlands and Watercourses for the Town of Westport and The Waterway Protection Line Ordinance (WPLO).

Further approvals may be needed from the state Department of Environmental Protection regarding removal and management of invasive phragmites. A contractor having a pesticide license must be used for phragmites removal.

Tree Warden and Tree Board
Before any diseased or dead trees are removed from Green's Farms Road or from other locations on the project site, a site review should be scheduled with the tree warden and the tree board to obtain approvals. The Conservation Department must approve removal of trees within 20 feet of the wetland.

Parks and Recreation Department
The HDC may wish to review the final treatment plan with the Parks and Recreation Department.

Police Department
The proposed access to the parking area from Green's Farms Road will need to be approved by the Police Department.

Sight distances in both directions and the setback from the Sherwood Island Connector Road must meet state and local requirements.

Utility Companies
Utility companies (electric, gas, water) should be contacted as design work is initiated particularly for the removal of invasive plants and diseased trees from the wall along Green's Farm Road.

Planning and Zoning
A review of the project should be conducted with the Planning and Zoning Department. Planning and Zoning will require a site plan application and Municipal Improvement Review pursuant to Sec. 8-24 of the Connecticut General Statutes.

Representative Town Meeting
If required, a formal presentation should be conducted with the Representative Town Meeting (RTM).

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Getting people involved in all aspects of the implementation process is important. Community members can be involved in design reviews, cleanup of invasive plant material, clearing of trails, trash pickup and maintenance of the site and surrounding areas. All community volunteer efforts should be done under the supervision of qualified personnel familiar with the site and town regulations. If the community is involved in project enhancements, they will take pride in it and will not tolerate abuse of the site or inappropriate behavior in the area.

The HDC has already initiated this process through open advertisement of public meetings as part of the open meetings legislation.

At the project kick-off meeting on June 15, 2010, members of the public openly participated and presented their ideas for this project site. Suggestions included ideas for community agriculture as well as ideas focusing on the preservation of the site's historic resources. All of the public's suggestions were considered in the preparation of this report and the conceptual design/treatment plan.

At an interim review meeting for the draft report, members of the public were again invited to review and comment or submit written comments to the HDC Staff Administrator at the town hall offices.

SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

The West Parish Meeting House historic site and State Archaeological Preserve is a designation that took years to come to fruition. The Historic District Commission now begins the process of guiding this town-owned space toward improved passive use.

Archaeological investigations have provided documentation to support the presence of the second West Parish Meeting House. Use of this site subsequent to the burning of the original structure in 1779, has been limited to agriculture and has probably impacted subsurface resources. Consequently, the Treatment Plan/Concept Design focuses on the continued preservation of this archaeology along with preservation of its natural resources and the enhancement of the historic features through appropriate preservation and restoration techniques and through interpretive signage.

In completing the site analysis and historic research for this project, the project design team and the HDC concluded that uses which impacted too much of the existing ground surface would be inappropriate. Possible uses such as leaf composting, agriculture and construction of foundations for municipal buildings would either penetrate the surface or compact the surface and thus impact a broad area of the site and probably damage the existing archaeological artifacts of the meeting house, possible schoolhouse and Native American campsites.

Given the significance of the site in the history of Westport and the site's State Archaeological designation, recommendations for the Concept Design/ Treatment plan focus on approaches which emphasize preservation. These recommendations include restoration of some extant elements such as the existing stone wall, restoration of the true indigenous landscape through management of invasive plant material, preservation of the area around the meeting house and possible schoolhouse through limited access and minimal maintenance practices and restoration of landscape character through vegetative buffers that screen 20th century elements from the interior view shed.

The treatment that defines the four corners of the meeting house structure serves as a 21st century sculptural feature and provides a "ghost structure" for the meeting house building so that visitors will have a visual image as to the meeting house footprint, height and location. The proposed interpretive signage will help to further communicate information about the meeting house as well as its possible related schoolhouse and the site's Native American artifacts. Prior to the installation of these tall posts as well as installation of fencing, signage and plantings, more detailed archaeological investigations will be completed.

Within the broader picture of the town-wide open space and greenway system, the site has potential for passive recreational use. Providing bicycle and pedestrian trail linkages to this site will increase community awareness of its place in Colonial and town history as well as provide another area for passive recreational use. The site may also become another stop in the Jennings Trail system.

This preservation plan provides a guide for securing the natural and archaeological resources of the site and providing an educational experience in order to highlight Westport's Colonial history. Preserving the archaeological resources of this site is essential if it is to remain a part of the Town of Westport's history.

Fig. 4-5 Native aster along the wetland/meadow edge of project site.

Fig. 4-6 Rock outcroppings at the high point in the northeastern section of the project

Fig. 4-7 Jennings Trail marker at the Lower Green's Farms Colonial Burying Ground

Funding Resources

The following are possible resources for funding and technical support on future phases of work.

- The American Society of Landscape Architects - Historic American Landscape Survey (HALS) http://www.asla.org
- Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection - Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program (WHIP) grants http://dep.state.ct.us/index.htm
- Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection - Greenways Assistance Center http://dep.state.ct.us/
- Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism http://www.cultureandtourism.org/cct/site/default.asp?cctNav_GID=
- The Conservation Fund - Kodak America Greenways Awards Grants http://www.conservationfund.org/?article=2106
- The Cultural Landscape Foundation http://www.tclf.org/
- EPA Water Quality - grants for wetland remediation and cleanup http://www.epa.gov/water/funding.html
- National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) America's Historical and Cultural Organizations Implementation and Planning Grants at www.neh.gov
- National Park Service - National Center for Preservation and Training Technology - grants which fund rehabilitation, restoration or reconstruction using unique methodologies and techniques. http://www.ncptt.nps.gov/
- National Park Service - Rivers and Trails http://www.ncrc.nps.gov/rtca/
- National Park Service - National Center for Recreation and Conservation http://www.ncrc.nps.gov/
- National Trust for Historic Preservation Funds http://www.preservationnation.org/resources/find-funding/grants/

Appendices

Record of Treatment Form
Record of Maintenance Form
List of Figures
List of Tables
Bibliography

RECORD OF TREATMENT FORM (This is a sample. Actual form will provide larger sections for notes)			
DATE:			
PERFORMED BY:			
Instructions: Provide written description for landscape elements addressed and treatment performed for each item.			
LANDSCAPE ELEMENT	**TREATMENT PERFORMED**	**DATES OF WORK**	**COST**
STONE WALLS			
WETLAND BOARDWALK			
INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE			
INTERPRETIVE POSTS FOR MEETING HOUSE			
TRAIL CLEARING; NEW TRAIL ROUTE INSTALLATION			
INVASIVE PLANT REMOVAL/ DEAD TREE REMOVAL/ PRUNING			
NEW BUFFER PLANTINGS AND WETLAND RESTORATION PLANTINGS			
PERIMETER AND PARKING AREA FENCING			
PARKING AREA SURFACE			

RECORD OF MAINTENANCE FORM (This is a sample. Actual form will provide larger sections for notes)

DATE:

PERFORMED BY:

Instructions: Provide written description for landscape elements addressed and treatment performed for each item.

LANDSCAPE ELEMENT	MAINTENANCE PERFORMED	DATES OF WORK	COST
STONE WALLS			
BOARDWALKS AND TRAILS			
INTERPRETIVE SIGNAGE			
CONSERVATION AREA— TALL POSTS MAINTENANCE			
MOWING AND OVERSEEDING OF AREAS OUTSIDE CONSERVATION AREA			
INVASIVE PLANT MANAGEMENT			
PRUNING AND MAINTENANCE OF BUFFER AND RESTORATION PLANTINGS			
FENCING			
PARKING AREA SURFACE			

LIST OF FIGURES

1-1 Aerial photograph of project site and environs.
1-2 Plan showing immediate vicinity surrounding the West Parish Meeting House Historic Site
2-1 Detail of 1933 interpretive map of Green's Farms area by George P. Jennings.
2-2 Interpretive illustration of the West Parish Meeting House for Westport Bicentennial.
2-3 Alna Meeting House, Maine.
2-4 Interior of Alna Meeting House, Maine.
2-5 Pew plan of the second West Parish Meeting House, circa 1741.
2-6 West Barnstable, MA meeting house. Structure is of the same period as West Parish Meeting House.
2-7 1986 plan showing archaeological test pits excavated by Lucinda McWeeney, Ph.D.
2-8 Graph showing data from electromagnetic induction survey. The black dashed rectangle depicts the approximate location of the meeting house within a larger four-sided grid.
2-9 Existing Conditions Plan.
2-10 View of wetland area looking north.
2-11 Joe Pye weed.
2-12 Wild aster and soft rush.
2-13 The project site as viewed across the road from the Lower Green's Farms Colonial Burying Ground.
2-14 Stone wall along Green's Farms Road.
2-15 The raised area/knoll within the southern portion of the site, looking east.
2-16 Winter view near the southwest end of the project site.
2-17 Winter view along Green's Farms Road.
2-18 The southeastern corner of the site.
2-19 Plan of the southern portion of the project site showing probable locations of the meeting house and the schoolhouse.
3-1 Overview map of project site showing assessment sections.
3-2 Wooden boardwalk at the Newman-Poses Nature Preserve, Westport, CT.
3-3 Wooden boardwalk in a seasonally wet area (Gisland Farm Audubon Center, Falmouth, ME).
3-4 Large granite step stones through a seasonally wet area (Browning Woods Trail, South Kingstown, RI).
3-5 Concept view showing 26-ft tall posts demarcating the meeting house location within the tall grass Conservation Area. The tall grass is defined by native Red Cedar trees at each corner. The proposed "Grasspave™" parking area in the foreground is defined by a cedar post and split-rail fence. An interpretive sign (right side of view) would provide detailed information about the site history.
3-6 A section of existing stone wall along Green's Farms Road in good condition.
3-7 A section of existing stone wall requiring repair.
3-8 The Lower Green's Farms Colonial Burying Ground provides an example of stone wall restoration.
3-9 Example of a trail head sign at the Browning Woods Trail, South Kingstown, RI.
3-10 Example of an interpretive sign along the Browning Woods Trail , South Kingston, RI.
3-11 The tall grass Conservation Area at left with temporary stakes noting the corner.
3-12 Invasive phragmites should be removed to maintain wetland biodiversity.
3-13 Invasive vines should be removed from the stone walls.
3-14 Overview map of proposed Treatment Plan/Concept Design.
3-15 Treatment Plan/Concept Design for northern section of project site.
3-16 Rock outcrops at high point/knoll in the northeastern part of the project site.
3-17 Stone walls that run through the woodlands in the northern section of the project site.
3-18 Treatment Plan/Concept Design for central section of project site.
3-19 Concept view showing proposed entrance to wetland boardwalk trail with interpretive sign.
3-20 Treatment Plan/Concept Design for southern section of project site.
3-21 Concept view showing proposed buffer plantings (proposed post and split-rail fence in background) to screen and secure the eastern property line.
4-1 Maps from 2007 Westport Plan of Conservation and Development showing Open Space & Greenway Path and the Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan. Green circle on each map denotes the West Parish Meeting House Historic Site.
4-2 Invasive crown vetch.
4-3 The Lower Green's Farms Colonial Burying Ground.
4-4 View across the southern portion of project site.
4-5 Native aster along wetland/meadow edge of project site
4-6 Rock outcroppings at high point in northeaster section of project site.
4-7 Jennings Trail marker at the Lower Green's Farms Colonial Burying Ground

All photographs, maps and images are by project team members unless otherwise noted.

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3-1 Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation as applied to the West Parish Meeting House Historic Site.

Table 3-2 Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties noting treatment actions as they relate to proposed site treatments for the project site.

Table 3-3 Suggested buffer plantings.

Table 3-4 Treatment actions by phase, noting projected costs and responsible agency or party

Table 3-5 Possible conflict or issue and suggested mechanism to address.

Table 3-6 Outline of recommended annual maintenance tasks.

Table 3-7 Compatibility of Proposed Treatment with US Green Building Council Leadership in Energy Efficient Design (LEED) and American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Sustainable Sites (SITES) criteria.

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