

HISTORIC PRESERVATION and HISTORIC DISTRICTS
Village of East Hampton, N.Y.

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Preserving East Hampton’s Heritage

The Village of East Hampton has a long history of commitment to historic preservation. When the Hook Windmill was purchased by the Village in 1922 it became the first building to be preserved as a historic landmark on the South Fork. The Village’s growing dedication to preserving its historic character culminated in 1986 with adoption of a historic preservation ordinance and the establishment of the Main Street Historic District. The Village has restored a number of historic properties since then.

The Village’s purchase of the Hook Windmill soon led to a second preservation initiative when the Village in 1927 bought Home Sweet Home, which at the time was up for sale. In 1948 a group of residents bought the historic Mulford House on behalf of the East Hampton Historical Society to prevent its dismantling and removal by the Brooklyn Museum.

While these early efforts focused on preserving individual buildings, more recent activities have moved towards recognizing and then protecting the historic character of entire neighborhoods within the Village. In 1974 a historic district containing 26 properties surrounding the Village Green was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places thanks to the efforts of the Ladies Village Improvement Society.

The LVIS has played a key role in increasing public awareness of East Hampton’s architectural history. In 1980, the organization conducted an “architectural inventory”

that resulted in additional historic districts within the Village being recognized by the National Register. These new historic districts included a larger portion of Main Street, the early farmhouses surrounding the Hook Mill green, and neighborhoods within the “Summer Colony.” The LVIS’s publication in 1982 of *East Hampton’s Heritage*, an architectural history and inventory, in particular increased appreciation of the nationally significant architecture of East Hampton’s turn-of-the-century “Summer Colony.”

Recognition by the National Register of Historic Places, while primarily honorary, is designed to encourage local preservation measures. In East Hampton’s case, it led to the adoption in 1986 of a historic preservation ordinance and the designation of three historic districts, the Main Street Historic District in 1986, the Hook Historic District in 1996, and the Hunting Lane Historic District in 1999.

The Main Street Historic District includes 59 properties, over half of which were built before 1850. Many of these shingled Georgian, Federal, and Greek revival period houses reflect East Hampton’s New England heritage. The district’s core is the Common of the original 1648 settlement which is now the Village Green, James Lane, and Main Street.

The Village’s historic preservation ordinance is designed to protect important buildings and features within the historic district from insensitive renovation or destruction. It ensures that incompatible new development isn’t erected where it can spoil the area’s appearance and depreciate property values. Many of the people who buy homes in the historic districts are “architectural patriots” who appreciate the unique character of their homes and are enthusiastic to restore and maintain them with sensitivity.

The ordinance is administered by the Design Review Board, whose seven members are appointed by the mayor. The Board reviews plans for any exterior alteration, demolition, or new construction within the district. Ordinary maintenance is exempt from review.

The Board reviews an application and issues a certificate of appropriateness if a proposed change is compatible with the historic and architectural character of that property and of the district as a whole. The Board routinely works closely with applicants to formulate suitable plans.

The Village’s commitment to historic preservation continues to grow. The Village purchased the eighteenth-century Beecher House and adapted it for use as the Village Hall. It restored the exterior of Home Sweet Home, now a museum. The Village also repaired the oak sills, foundation, and first floor framing of the early eighteenth-century Osborn-Jackson House on Main Street, owned by the Village and used as headquarters by the East Hampton Historical Society.

The Village also developed and approved the preservation of nearly half the eleven-acre Gardiner home lot on James Lane, the last intact property from the original 1648 settlement. As part of the preservation, the Village purchased and restored the 1804 Gardiner Windmill, which stands on the Gardiner home lot.

East Hampton offers a remarkable glimpse of both an early American settlement and of life in a late nineteenth-century summer resort. The Village's commitment to historic preservation will continue to ensure that East Hampton's one-of-a-kind heritage will not be lost.

Preserving Our Historic Open Spaces

No open space within the Village is more important than the remaining pieces of the 1648 town common around which the properties in the Main Street Historic District and the Hook Historic District are situated.

The East Hampton settlers laid out a broad street, which they called a "common", down the center of the plain west of Hook Pond. Their dwellings lined either side of the common, and within the common they built their meetinghouse and placed their burying ground. The common represents the community spirit of the 1648 East Hampton settlement where the land was commonly owned to be divided equally among the proprietors.

The early common served as a street as well as a gathering place for livestock to be herded to common pasture and was more mud and dirt than grass. During the nineteenth century the common began to acquire its present appearance when street trees were planted, white picket fences built and large areas of grass maintained.

Today the Village Green is the entrance to the Village, Main Street with its grass borders, the lawns, also referred to as "greens", around the Hook Mill, and the Sheep Pound, the fenced green across from the Post Office, are all parts of the broad common which once swept from Town Pond northward to Cedar Street. These open spaces are remnants of the design of the 1648 settlement and a reminder of the sense of community it represented. The greens, pond, old elms, and windmills also convey a sense of the pastoral East Hampton landscape of the last century.

Over the years portions of the common fell into private ownership. The modern effort to retrieve and preserve the remaining open areas of the common began when the Village was incorporated in 1920. Within two years the Village Board purchased the Hook Mill green from the Dominy family. This was followed by reclaiming the Sheep Pound which was also privately owned. Today, the remaining greens of the common are recognized and protected as core elements of the Main Street Historic District and the Hook Historic District.

In 1997 East Hampton Village Open Space Program recommended creating a "Greens and Parks" zoning district for valuable public lands. This zoning district would add yet another layer of protection for these historic open spaces at the heart of our village.

Village Receives Preservation Award: The East Hampton Village Board received a 1997 Government Champion of Historic Preservation Award from the Preservation League of New York State at their annual meeting in Albany this May. The Preservation League recognized the hard work and perseverance of Mayor Rickenbach, the Trustees, and the Mayor's Committee for Historic Preservation, chaired by Trustee David H. Brown, in establishing the Hook Historic District in 1996

Home Sweet Home

Home Sweet Home, a seventeenth-century shingled cottage at 14 James Lane in East Hampton, is perhaps the most shining example of early East Hampton architecture.

The building, once the home of John Howard Payne and the inspiration for his popular song, "Home Sweet Home," has a typical saltbox roofline. Its walls are covered with the three-foot long shingles common to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The building is a vivid reminder of what homes were like in rural East Hampton centuries ago.

The Village of East Hampton's commitment to preserving its history is exemplified by its approach to a recent project to restore the exterior of Home Sweet Home.

Home Sweet Home, owned and operated by the Village as a museum with period antiques and an extensive collection of Payne memorabilia, was probably last shingled in the second quarter of the eighteenth century by Payne's grandfather, Aaron Isaacs. The three-foot shingles installed by Isaacs were made from the heartwood of Atlantic white cedar trees from virgin forests. The centers of those slow-growing trees were extremely dense and full of natural preservative oils. Shingles made from them could last for centuries, and the ones on Home Sweet Home did.

But after two hundred years of exposure to the elements, the shingles had weathered away and become paper-thin. The underlying frame would soon begin to deteriorate.

The Village knew it would be a challenge to find three-foot shingles to replace the worn shingles, let alone shingles that would match the quality and longevity of the old shingles. Because the longest commercially made shingle today is 24 inches, the shingles would have to be custom-made.

Robert Hefner, the Village's historic preservation consultant, planned and supervised the work. He spent a year searching for a high-quality shingle that would maintain the building's architectural integrity.

The search targeted the three species of trees used for shingles in East Hampton from 1750 to 1800, when Aaron Isaacs had shingled Home Sweet Home and John Howard Payne spent his early days there. These species were the local Atlantic white cedar and

Eastern white pine as well as Tidewater red cypress brought here by the coastal trade with southern colonies.

Unfortunately, the Atlantic white cedar or Eastern white pine from today's second and third-growth trees does not match the quality of the old shingles on Home Sweet Home.

A source for old growth Tidewater cypress, however, was found. These cypress logs, 24 to 36 inches in diameter, had been harvested at the turn of the century, but never milled into lumber. The cypress had the same dense heartwood and abundance of natural preservative oils which characterized the old shingles on Home Sweet Home. The logs were sawn to produce 36-inch shingles. The shingles were planed to resemble the smooth surface that would have been created by a drawknife in the 1700s. These new cypress shingles match the quality of the old Home Sweet Home shingles and will last well over a hundred years.

Telemark Construction, Inc. of Bridgehampton launched and completed the restoration last year. When the timber frame of the house was uncovered in preparation for installing the new shingles, some rotted wood was found. Deteriorated framing members were replaced with new white oak timbers and the original mortise-and-tenon joints were duplicated.

The use of historically appropriate materials of the highest quality reflects the desire of East Hampton Village to preserve its unique heritage.

Gardiner "Home Lot"

The original settlement of East Hampton looked altogether different than the sprawling village of today.

The 1648 colony was typical of New England Puritan towns with a broad Common, which ran along Main Street and James Lane, flanked by home lots of 8 to 12 acres each. Dwellings were at the heads of the lots near the Common and open farm fields stretched out behind them.

The 34 original East Hampton home lots represented more than divided property. They reflected the economic and social structure of the village. Only the owners of home lots could vote. Each home lot represented its owner's share in the 30,000 undivided acres of the town.

Because of development, today only one home lot remains intact – an 11 acre parcel on James Lane belonging to attorney Olney Mairs "Bill" Gardiner, a descendant of Lion Gardiner, the original owner, who lies in the South End Burying Ground across the way.

The Gardiner Home Lot features a nine-acre farm field sloping down toward Hook Pond which also serves as the setting for the 1804 Gardiner Windmill. The mill, which retains

much of its original machinery, has the finest interior finish of any Long Island windmill and represents the highest level of millwrighting craftsmanship by Nathaniel Dominy V, the prominent woodworker.

The Gardiner Home Lot is the only tangible reminder of the structure of the original East Hampton settlement and the only remaining agricultural property in the Main Street Historic District. The field and windmill are a remnant of East Hampton's long history as an agricultural community.

Bill Gardiner submitted an application to the Village seeking permission to subdivide the Gardiner Home Lot into three residential parcels of equal size. The plan would have done away with the nine-acre open field.

The proposal could have represented a major loss to the Main Street Historic District. But the Village Planning Board, recognizing the property's historic significance, wanted to preserve as much of it as possible. Mr. Gardiner soon came to agree. Demonstrating flexibility, he worked hand-in-hand with the Planning Board, the Design Review Board, the Zoning Board of Appeals, and the Board of Trustees to formulate a plan that would preserve a large portion of the home lot. Mayor Paul F. Richenbach Jr.'s effort to promote communication between the different Village boards allowed the plan to come to fruition.

The end result of discussions, negotiations and compromise was a creative plan that, essentially, gave Mr. Gardiner what he wanted, gave the Village what it sought and preserved for all time an important fragment of East Hampton's past.

The final plan preserves intact the front five acres of the home lot while allowing two new building lots on the rear half where the land slopes down toward Hook Pond. An agricultural easement preserves the front three acres of the farm field and a visual easement connects that open field to the Gardiner Windmill, which was offered to the Village for acquisition.

A visual easement extending from the windmill to the field was cleared and the rear field was planted in corn by Mr. Gardiner, who recently purchased farm equipment and can now add the job description "farmer" to his resume. The result is an open agricultural setting for the Gardiner Windmill.

"I am very happy with the plan because it preserves the historical ambiance of the property while still permitting development," Donald Hunting, chairman of the Planning Board, said. "We were especially pleased with the sight easements that will permit people to view the windmill in more or less its original setting."

The Gardiner Mill

The Village of East Hampton is the only municipality in the country to maintain three historic windmills. These windmills recall the English roots and agrarian character of our early community. Today the windmills symbolize our history and the special qualities of our historic buildings and their setting.

A masterwork by one of America's best-known craftsmen has been given a new lease on life.

The Village of East Hampton has restored the 1804 Gardiner Windmill to its original glory. The windmill on James Lane is an outstanding example of the millwrighting skills of Nathaniel Dominy V, the most talented of East Hampton's prominent Dominy family of woodworkers.

Nathaniel Dominy V built the Gardiner Windmill in 1804 on the James Lane home lot of John Lyon Gardiner, the seventh Proprietor of Gardiner's Island. Nathaniel Dominy was a cabinetmaker as well as a millwright and the Gardiner Windmill displays his skill in its finely crafted timber frame and precise wooden machinery.

The Gardiner Mill's complex structure is a monument to the traditional art of timber framing. The white oak with which it is built was felled on Gardiner's Island. Nathaniel Dominy gave particular attention to the details of the Gardiner Mill frame and hand-planed the timbers to a fine finish. Dominy gave this extra effort because this was the first of a new model windmill, built to run two pair of millstones rather than one, and because he built it for his major patron, John Lyon Gardiner.

In 1996 the Village undertook a state-of-the-art restoration of the Gardiner Windmill. Repair of the timber frame utilized traditional scarf joints secured with wood pins. Long shingles restored the original exterior appearance. A new windshaft was fashioned to a design based on the only remaining Dominy windshaft, that of the Gardiner's Island windmill. Authentic new sails were built to plans drawn in 1889 by Nathaniel Dominy VII. A replication of a nineteenth-century horizontal-board fence was erected around the mill lot.

The Gardiner Farm, just beyond the mill lot, is a vital part of the windmill's setting. Olney M. Gardiner cooperated with the Village in designing the 1994 subdivision of the Gardiner Home Lot in a way that would preserve the windmill and its agricultural setting.

East Hampton's diligence in preserving its history is exemplified by the Gardiner Windmill restoration. The extraordinary generosity of the project's many donors truly made this a village-wide effort.

Nathaniel Dominy V: The Legacy of an East Hampton Craftsman

The legacy of Nathaniel Dominy V provides us with one of the clearest glimpses of eighteenth-century East Hampton. Many of the objects he fashioned, the windmills he built, the tools he used and the records he kept survive to illustrate the skills and lifestyle of this prominent East Hampton craftsman.

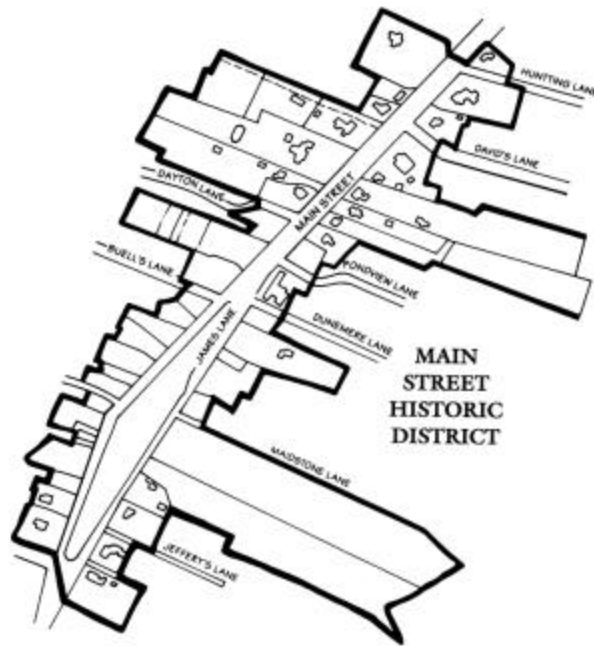
Nathaniel Dominy V, who lived from 1770 to 1852, was the most active cabinetmaker and millwright in a family of skilled woodworkers and clockmakers. He could build almost anything – from fine furniture to clocks to agricultural machinery. Five of the six Long Island windmills he built between 1795 and 1815 survive today, including East Hampton's Gardiner Mill and Hook Mill.

A maple secretary which Dominy crafted for John Lyon Gardiner in 1800, is among his most ambitious pieces. The same skilled hands and aesthetic sense are evident in the finely crafted frame of the Gardiner Windmill which Dominy built for Gardiner four years later.

While Nathaniel Dominy's legacy is great, the nucleus of it is gone. The 1715 Dominy House which stood at the southwest corner of North Main Street and Cedar Street was demolished in 1946. The house contained Nathaniel Dominy's woodworking shop and clock shop complete with his tools and machinery.

Nathaniel Dominy V's skill is still most evident in his 1804 Gardiner Mill and his 1806 Hook Mill. Fifty years after the loss of the Dominy House, the Village Board took steps to preserve the remaining Dominy legacy. The creation of the Hook Historic District protects the setting of the Hook Mill. Mayor Paul F. Rickenbach's successful appeal for funds for the Gardiner Mill has allowed the careful restoration of this Dominy landmark

Main Street Historic District



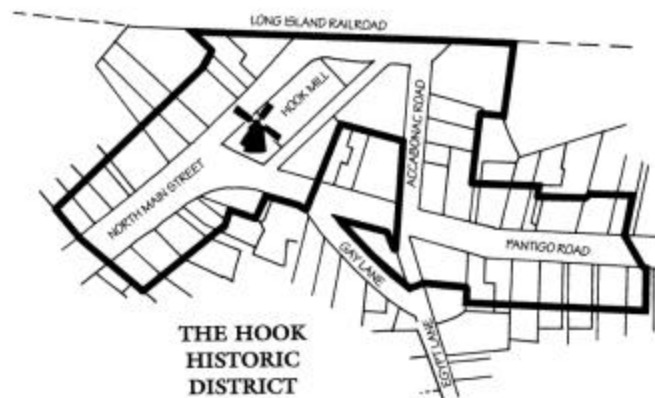
The core of the original East Hampton settlement was a broad common, running northeast-southwest, flanked by 34 long home lots of eight to twelve acres. The broad common is today Main Street, James Lane and the Village Green. The Main Street Historic District begins at the south end of Main Street and runs three quarters of a mile north where it ends at the beginning of the commercial zone. The district contains the front portions of most of the original home lots and other significant portions of original home lots that were undeveloped when the district was created.

The spatial order of the district was established by the configuration of the settlement that was laid out in 1648. Houses that were built at the heads of the home lots, often directly on the property line with the common. Well into the nineteenth century houses built in the district continued to be sited close to the common or street so that the order of houses along the street remained the same although the rhythm became more dense. The district contains 31 buildings erected before 1850. This group of buildings and their direct relationship with the street are the dominant image of the historic district. These buildings are all wood frame construction, mostly shingled, and are of conservative design, employing decorative features and stylistic elements sparingly.

Beginning in the late nineteenth century, changes in the historic district have been brought about by East Hampton's life as a summer resort. From 1885 to 1924 four early homes were moved back from the street and remodeled in the Colonial Revival Style for use as summer residences. The nine houses in the district dating from 1850 to 1900 and all but two of the nine houses erected on street-front properties in the twentieth century

(the last was in 1955) respected the established spatial order and were sited close to the street, oriented toward the street and today form a part of the orderly progression of buildings on either side of the old common. Most of these newer houses also respected the traditional building forms and materials of East Hampton, using wood frame construction, shingle cladding and many using traditional building forms in a freer and more complex massing. An entirely new style and new materials were introduced to the Village Green in the 1920's when the neo-Elizabethan St. Luke's Episcopal Church and Rectory and the East Hampton Library brought stone and stucco walls and slate and tile roofs to the district. Although strikingly different, these buildings contribute to the district as representatives of a period of keen local interest in East Hampton's English roots. Similarly, the 1930 Guild Hall, built of brick and introducing a larger scale into the district, reflects the interest in the Colonial Revival which also led to alterations of a number of early East Hampton houses and to the 1960 remodeling of the Presbyterian Church.

“The Hook” Historic District



“The Hook” Historic District includes the remnants of the old village commons at the north end of Main Street in an area which was known as “the hook”; the historic buildings surrounding the commons; and historic residences on Pantigo Road which runs eastward from the commons along the north edge of the Eastern Plain fields.

The remaining parts of the old commons include the Memorial Green which is the site of the Hook Windmill; the North End Cemetery behind the Hook Mill; a small parcel north of the cemetery, the open meadow between the cemetery and Accabonac Road; and the triangular “Sheep Fold” at the corner of Pantigo Road and Egypt Lane. The district includes 27 contributing residences which date from the early eighteenth century to the early twentieth century; the 1806 Hook Windmill; and the 1901 United Methodist Church of East Hampton.

The boundaries of “The Hook” Historic District define the limits of a concentration of intact historic buildings centered around the remnants of the north end commons and

continuing eastward along Pantigo Road. The boundaries of the historic district separate the historic resources contained within from non-historic commercial and residential properties at the perimeter. The northern boundary is determined by the Long Island Rail Road right-of-way. The western extent of the district is determined by the adjacent non-historic commercial development. The eastern boundary on Pantigo Road is determined by the extent of intact historic residences ending with the early eighteenth century Dayton-Stratton House. The southern boundary omits a concentration of non-historic commercial buildings along Pantigo Roads which diminish the setting of the historic properties; however the Methodist Church helps to screen these properties from the Memorial Green and North End Cemetery, and the “Sheep Fold” and open meadow along Accabonac Road help to maintain the setting of the historic properties at the east end of the district.

The Memorial Green, North End Cemetery, “Sheep Fold” and the other two parcels of the old commons form a large area of open space at the center of the district. The North End Cemetery, established in 1770, includes several hundred nineteenth century marble and sandstone headstones generally arranged in rows parallel with North Main Street, as well as an undetermined number of late eighteenth century graves, some of which are marked by slate and sandstone headstones. The cemetery is enclosed by a wooden picket fence with monolithic stone posts. The adjacent Hook Windmill is located on a small artificial earthen mound immediately south of the cemetery. The relatively treeless Memorial Green and North End Cemetery provide an intact setting for the Hook Windmill.

“The Hook” Historic District is historically significant as a concentration of buildings, structures, and sites which contribute to an understanding of the architectural, cultural, economic, and social history of East Hampton from the early eighteenth century to the early twentieth century. Included among the contributing properties in the historic district are remnants of the early commons, a cemetery established in 1770 and displaying noteworthy examples of late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century funerary art; a windmill built in 1806 and distinguished by its high degree of integrity; typical East Hampton house types built from the early eighteenth century to c. 1920 which illustrate a continuum of stylistic influences and correspond to broad periods of development in the village; a number of agricultural outbuildings and carriage barns; and a church built in 1901 which combines Gothic style features with an informal shingle siding. The historic spatial arrangement of these resources around a former commons and along an early roadway further distinguishes this district and contributes significantly to its historic sense of time and place.

The remnants of the old common also serve as reminders of East Hampton’s original design, with home lots laid out to either side of a broad common. In this way East Hampton was modeled after other New England proprietary settlements and the common is a reminder of East Hampton’s New England cultural heritage.

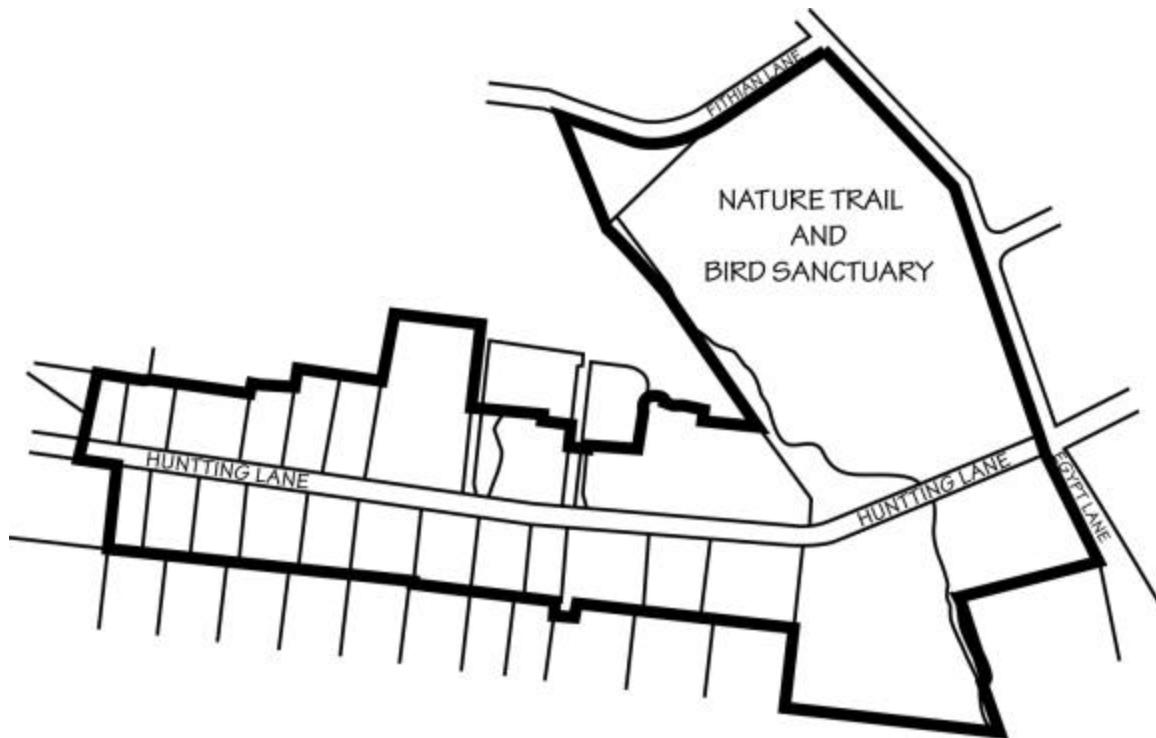
The small triangular green known as the “Sheep Fold” is also a remnant of the commons and contributes to the setting of the district. This was used during the nineteenth and

early twentieth centuries to confine sheep during the annual spring and fall livestock drives to and from the Montauk summer pastures. The Montauk pastures were perhaps the single most important resource for East Hampton’s farmers and the livestock drives which the “Sheep Fold” recalls were a significant time in the farmer’s year.

The historic properties within “The Hook” Historic District are unified by similarities in scale, materials and texture and by traditional landscape features such as large deciduous shade trees and a general openness to the street due to a lack of landscape screening. The relationship of these features around the old common and on either side of Pantigo Road and the strong visual presence of the windmill and the church contribute to this district’s unique and historic identity.

“The Hook” Historic District possesses special character, historic and aesthetic interest and value as part of the cultural, economic and social history of East Hampton; contains a vast majority of buildings that embody the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style; contains buildings and structures that are the work of a designer or builder of local importance; and contains properties that because of a unique location or singular physical characteristic, represent an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood. By reason of possessing the above qualities “The Hook” Historic District constitutes a distinct geographic area of the village.

The Hunting Lane Historic District



When Hunting Lane was opened in 1893 East Hampton was at the beginning of a building boom which would transform it from an agrarian community to a summer resort. Hunting Lane became the setting for an important chapter in the early history of our summer colony.

Charles and Mary Parsons, proprietors of the Hunting Inn, ran Hunting Lane down the middle of their vast home lot and constructed a bridge over the Hook Pond dreen to connect with Egypt Lane. This open pastureland, which had been in the Hunting family for two hundred years, provided prime building sites close to Main Street. Hunting Lane developed rapidly and within ten years the twelve cottages that today give the street its character had all been constructed.

What distinguished Hunting Lane was that substantial new houses were constructed both for wealthy summer visitors as well as for local businessmen and tradesmen who were enjoying the economic benefits of the new summer colony. Among the summer cottages is *Greycroft* at 63 Hunting Lane, built for the Woodhouse family, important members of the East Hampton summer colony. Among the homes built by local residents are those of the builders George A. Eldrege and Edward M. Gay, the mason Norman Barns, the plumber S.C. Grimshaw, and the home of James E. Hunting, president of the East Hampton Lumber and Coal Co.

Hunting Lane is also noteworthy for the similarities between the summer cottages and the year-round homes. This is especially true of the six residences which reflect the popularity of the Shingle Style during this period among both East Hampton's summer residents and local businessmen. The 1894 *Greycroft*, designed by I.H. Green, Jr. for Lorenzo G. Woodhouse, is one of the Village's grand Shingle Style summer houses. The 1901 George A. Eldredge House at 41 Hunting Lane, designed by the builder, demonstrates the adaptability of the Shingle Style to a modest-sized, year-round residence. Joining the Shingle Style houses is a group of distinguished Queen Anne Style houses, all built by local residents, which contribute to the harmony of the street with their shingled exteriors, gabled roofs and restrained ornamentation.

Today Hunting Lane evokes the best qualities of East Hampton's early summer colony and recalls the close relationships between the summer colony and the local residential areas which characterized the Village at the turn of the century.

Hunting Lane is a historic district with a strong and consistent character. The twelve historic houses are similar in their scale, form and shingled exteriors and are closely related in architectural style. The rhythm of these houses on either side of the street, their similar setbacks and open front yards allow each historic house to contribute to the larger setting of the Lane.

The residents of Hunting Lane worked closely with the Mayor's Committee on Historic Preservation in establishing the Hunting Lane Historic District. Residents played an active role in drawing up guidelines tailored to preserving the historic character of their neighborhood. One Hunting Lane homeowner, Irene Krone, noted: "Hunting Lane is a

beautiful street. We are all very pleased in having played our part in preserving this historically important part of our village.”