

VII

HISTORIC RESOURCES

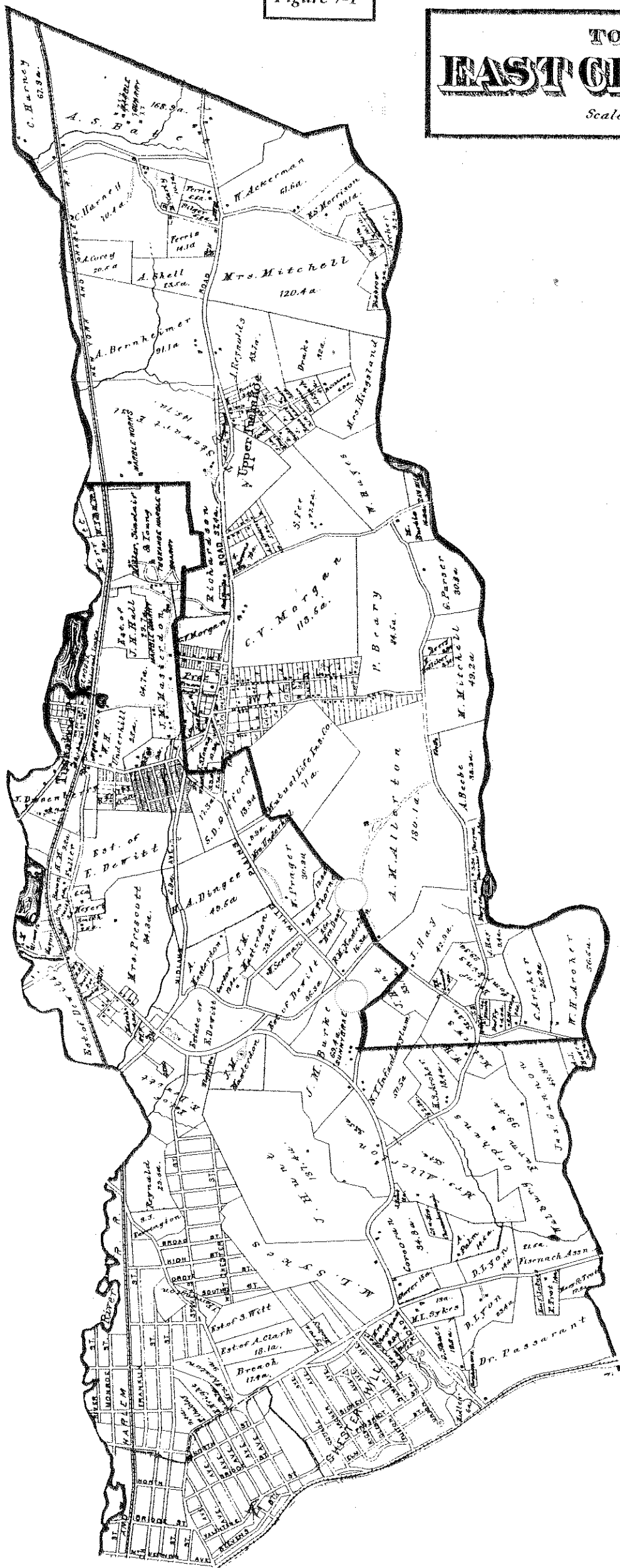
**"That men do not learn very much from the lessons
of history is the most important of all the lessons
that history has to teach"**

Aldous Huxley

Figure 7-1

TOWN OF EAST CHESTER CO.

Scale 1200 Ft. per inch



TOWN OF EASTCHESTER

Westchester County, New York



Cleary Consulting

7.0 HISTORIC RESOURCES

7.1 GOALS

Goals: Identify the significant historic and cultural resources that represent the town's common heritage, and preserve those resources so that Eastchester's future residents will benefit from the experiences of the past.

7.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

A. Town History:

Eastchester, one of Westchester County's oldest communities, maintains a rich historic heritage. Prior to the European settlement of North America, the area around Eastchester had long been inhabited by various groups of indigenous Algonquin Native Americans.

The first recorded European into the area was Anne Hutchinson, a New Englander forced from her Puritan community due to her independent views on religion. In 1642, she and a handful of followers settled in the Dutch territory of "Vredeland" (Land of Peace), in the Wilderness near where St. Paul's Church was later built (Mt. Vernon). A group of Native Americans led by Chief Wampage massacred the settlers and no further settlement occurred for 20 years. In 1664 a man named Thomas Pinckney and 10 other farm families from Fairfield Connecticut obtained a deed allowing them to "settle down at Hutchinson's." In 1665, these settlers drew up the first town laws known as the Eastchester Covenant. Today we still follow some of the practices listed in the Covenant.

Pinckney's deed only covered the southern part of old Eastchester. The current area of the town was not obtained until about 1700. At that time, the "Long Reach" (present day Eastchester) was added to the town. The purchase price was 13 guns, 12 coats, 12 kettles, 12 axes, 2 adzes, and 4 barrels of cider.

Eastchester's first laws, the Eastchester Covenant, was adopted in 1665.

St Paul's Church, in the old Village of Eastchester, has been designated by Congress as the National Shrine of the Bill of Rights.

In the nineteenth century, a rich vein of marble was discovered which supported the town's primary industry for over a century.

In the 1700's, the little village of Eastchester grew and progressed. It was situated along one of the most important crossroads in the region: the old Boston Post Road. A village square evolved and a meeting house was built near St. Paul's Church. This square is one of the most historic areas of our past.

In 1733, on the village green located on the square, an historic event took place that connects the town with the origins of the concept of freedom of the press. A corrupt royal governor named William Cosby unsuccessfully attempted to fix an election in Eastchester to the colonial assembly. John Peter Zenger, in newspaper articles in New York City, published criticism Cosby's failed attempt to manipulate the election. Zenger was imprisoned for the serious charge of seditious libel. His acquittal on the grounds that he had only printed the truth would lay the foundation over 50 years later for freedom of the press being incorporated in the first amendment of the Bill of Rights. St. Paul's Church, the graveyard, and the museum is all that remains of the old Village of Eastchester. The site is run by the National Park Service and has been designated by Congress as the National Shrine of the Bill of Rights.

Throughout the War for Independence, Eastchester was part of the neutral ground between British-held New York and American-held territory to the north. This area was ravaged by the Cowboys (British sympathizers) and the Skinners (who favored the Americans). Few areas in colonial America suffered more or longer during the revolution than did Eastchester and the rest of the neutral ground.

After the war, the area calmed and gradually prospered. In the early 1800's a rich vein of marble was discovered in the valley west of White Plains Road. Commercial quarrying on a small scale existed from 1817, but did not become a major industry until 1832 with the arrival of Alexander Masterton. He and a partner had obtained a contract to repair numerous buildings in Washington D.C. ruined 20 years before in the War of 1812. Masterton needed a dependable and reliable source of marble and found it in Eastchester. Others followed Masterton and, by the latter part of the 19th century, a string of quarries was in operation from Main Street in Tuckahoe to the Scarsdale border.

The quarries brought the railroad. In 1831, soon after the steam engine had been introduced into the U.S., The New York & Harlem Railroad Company incorporated as one of the first railroads in the country and ran its tracks north to White Plains. In 1844, quarry owners and the town raised \$15,000 to bring the railroad into the area. Tuckahoe became the only stop between the Bronx and White Plains.

In the 19th century, Tuckahoe industry, centering around the quarries in the western portion of the town and the mills built on the west side of the Bronx River, attracted people to the town. The town outside of the villages of Bronxville and Tuckahoe consisted of farms, forests, a race track called Allendale near present day Siwanoy Country Club and a huge estate owned by Samuel Iselin covering the eastern part of the town all the way up to Lake Isle Country Club.

In the first half of the 19th century, the quarries brought the railroad and as the 19th century came to an end, the railroad brought about the growth of suburban neighborhoods in the town of Eastchester. In 1890, William Van Duzen Lawrence started his park in Bronxville, one of the most strikingly attractive and expensive residential areas in the country.

Historic records document the beginnings of the residential neighborhoods that make up the town today. Prior to the First World War, these residential clusters included:

1. Waverly Square including Hall Avenue, Glen Road, New Street and Jackson Avenue;
2. The area formerly known as Upper Tuckahoe or Sebastopol including Water Street and Stewart Place, the area north of present day Eastchester High School;
3. Houses built along Highland Avenue, Tuckahoe Avenue, Caldwell Street, Prospect Street and Ridge Street;
4. Houses built along White Plains Road and Orchard Street;

Prior to WW I
7 clusters of houses
formed the nucleus
of the town's present
day neighborhoods

5. Houses built on or near Old Wilmot Road;
6. The north end of town around the present Dunwoodie Park;
7. Houses built in Chester Heights for commuters on the now defunct Boston - Westchester Railroad.

By the early part of this century, four 18 hole golf courses earned Eastchester the nickname "Cradle of American Golf"

By World War I four eighteen hole golf courses had been built on what had been farmland and woods. Nan O'Reilly, golf editor of the New York Evening Journal dubbed Eastchester "the Cradle of American Golf".

Estates were present in Eastchester, like those of A.T. Stewart, a 19th century department store tycoon, and Samuel J. Iselin, whose 890 acre estate stretched along the eastern part of town.

The economic prosperity of the 1920's, the completion of the Bronx River Parkway and the advent of automobile mass production fostered the development of new neighborhoods and the growth of old ones. Substantial housing developments were constructed in Green Knolls, Bronxville Manor and California Ridge. Luxurious high rise apartments were erected along Garth Road. In 1927, two new high schools were completed in Eastchester and Tuckahoe.

The stock market crash and the ensuing depression in the 1930's ended the period of expansion and investment. The Interlaken Apartments, completed in 1939 as affordable housing for struggling wage earners during the depression, was the only major development constructed during the thirties.

The last great influx of people and neighborhood building took place after World War II. Returning veterans favored new housing opportunities in suburban communities like Eastchester, instead of the overcrowded city. The resulting Baby Boom left a distinct impression on the community. In 1944 there were less than 100 students in the graduating class of Eastchester High School. By 1970, that number had tripled. Lake Isle, Wilmont Manor and Huntley Acres were the last three new large post war housing developments.

The commercial development of Eastchester also changed dramatically after World War II. Both Tuckahoe and Bronxville maintained concentrated commercial development within their boundaries. With the exception of Waverly Square, which dates back to the Civil War, the Town Outside has developed more unevenly. No concentrated hub or downtown emerged. Commercial activity, like the development of the shopping centers along White Plains Road, retail uses on Brook Street or mixed uses in North Eastchester reflect the uncoordinated growth of these uses.

Eastchester is a product of the historic development of the area. This legacy offers a rich heritage, but also a challenge for the Town Outside to succeed in its ongoing effort to embrace its own community identity.

B. Historic Resources:

No sites within the Town of Eastchester are listed on the State or Federal Registers of Historic Places. As described above however, the town does indeed have a significant history. Three sites of particular significance are:

46 Stewart Place (the Shroudmaker's House) -

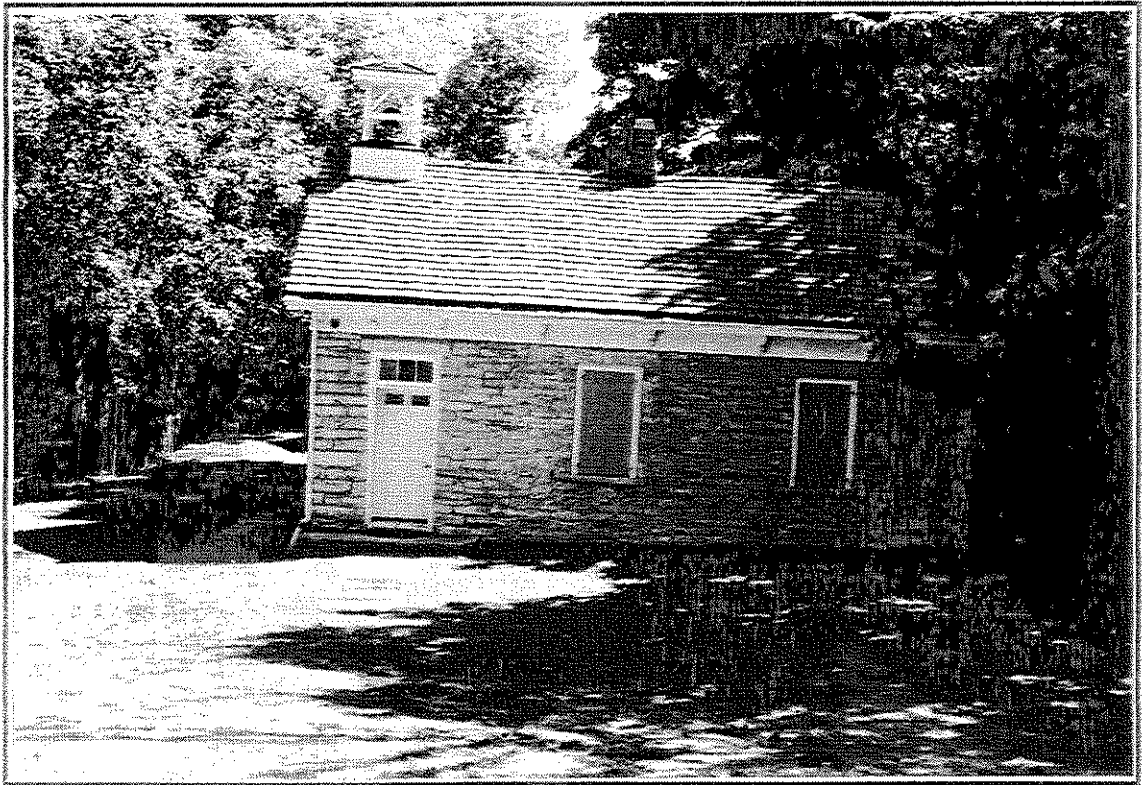
Built circa 1760, this home is thought to be the oldest in Eastchester; it was home to a shroudmaker. This building is listed on the Westchester County Inventory of Historic Places.

The Marble School House - California Road. This building was constructed on local marble in 1835 and moved to its present location in 1869. Today the building houses the Eastchester Historical Society. This site has been recently nominated to the National Register.

Old Boston Westchester Rail Line - The remnants of this regionally significant railroad can be seen today in fence posts along Oregon Road made from the railroad rails.

The shroudmaker's house on Stewart Place is believed to be the oldest building in Eastchester.

In addition to the facilities noted above, an inventory (Figure #7-1) has been conducted by the Westchester County Department of Planning, Division of Housing and Community Development to identify buildings of historical significance to the town. This study was of a limited area, and did not include the entire town. This inventory can be used as a basis for the study and for nomination for the County Inventory and or the State or Federal Registers.



(Marble School House)

**Figure 7-2
Inventory of Historically Significant Buildings**

Address	Original Use	Current Use	Date Built	Significance
95 Tuckahoe Ave.	Residential	Residential	1860	Retains original character despite alteration. Earliest structure in immediate area.
65 Tuckahoe Ave.	Residential	Residential	1932	Vernacular interpretation of Colonial Revival style.
16 Ridge St.	Residential	Residential	1936	Retains original character.
5 Ridge St.	Residential	2 Fam.Res	1858	Despite alterations, structure retains much original character. Constructed of local marble.
17 Richardson Pl	Residential	Residential	1903	Retains much original character.
31 Prospect St.	Residential	Residential	1880	Structure retains much of its original character.
21 Prospect St.	Residential	Residential	1905	Intact early 20th century residence.
497 White Plains Rd.	Residential	Residential	1902	Retains some original character. Remaining example of early 20th century residential development.
478 White Plains Rd.	Residential	Commercial	1875	Original French 2nd Empire character. Earliest building in area.
439 White Plains Rd.	Commercial	Commercial	1928	Illustrates early 20th century commercial development within town center.
435 White Plains Rd.	Residential	Residential	1907	Early 20th century structure retains much original American Four-Square character.
433 White Plains Rd.	Commercial	Commercial	1928	Retains some original character.
429-431 White Plains Rd.	Commercial	Commercial	1928	Retains some original character.
417-419 White Plains Rd.	Commercial	Commercial	1922	Illustrates early commercial development within town.
345 White Plains Rd.	Commercial	Commercial	1929	A Medieval Revival illustration of early 20th century commercial development. Retains original character and materials.
298 White Plains Rd.	Residential	Residential	1910	Structure retains original character.
56 Orchard St.	Residential	Residential	1924	Good example of small scale residential structure with Craftsman detail. Retains original character.
51 Orchard St.	Residential	Residential	1870	Structure maintains original character.
27 New St.	Residential	2 Fam.Res	1851	Despite alterations, structure retains much original character. One of the earliest structures in immediate area.
26 New St.	Residential	Residential	1926	Vernacular Mission Revival style, unusual in area. Retains original character.
16 New St.	Residential	Residential	1890	Retains original character.
299 Main St.	Education	Education	1897	Original portion retains much of its original character.
295 Main St.	Comm./Res.	Comm./Res	1910	Retains original character.
279 Main St.	Residential	Residential	1910	Early multi-family building, retains original character.
255 Main St.	Firehouse	Firehouse	1927	Illustration of Colonial Revival style, popular for municipal buildings in the 1930's.
231 Main St.	Comm./Res.	Comm./Res	1927	Illustrates early 20th century mixed development. Tudor style popular during that period.
215 Main St.	MF Residential	MF Res./Comm.	1891	Structure retains some original character.
203 Main St.	Residential	Residential	1906	Retains much original character.
201 Main St.	Residential	Residential	1876	One of the earliest structures in the immediate area. Retains some original character.
197 Main St.	Residential	Residential	1901	Retains much original detail and character.
146 Lincoln Ave.	Res./Comm	Res./Comm.	1918	Retains much original character.

Figure 7-2
Inventory of Historically Significant Buildings

Address	Original Use	Current Use	Date Built	Significance
144 Lincoln Ave.	Residential	Residential	1918	Retains some original character.
50 Jackson Ave.	Residential	Residential	1891	Retains much original character. One of the earliest buildings in the area.
41 Jackson Ave.	Residential	Residential	1910	Retains some original Queen Anne style character.
133 Hillside Pl.	Retail/Apts.	Retail/Apts.	1928	Much original Medieval Revival character remains intact.
109 Hillside Pl.	Residential	MF Res.	1923	Largely intact local example of American Four-Square style.
107 Hillside Pl.	MF Res.	MF Res.	1927	Mission Revival style is unusual in area. Retains much original character.
142 Highland Ave.	Residential	Residential	1875	Retains much original character.
118 Highland Ave.	Residential	Residential	1916	Good local example of American Four-Square style with unusual decorative detail.
112 Highland Ave.	Residential	Residential	1876	Retains much original character.
67 Highland Ave.	Residential	Residential	1928	One of six adjacent structures, all in similar style. Best example.
65 Highland Ave.	Residential	Residential	1928	Vernacular interpretation of Tudor Revival style.
39 Highland Ave.	Residential	Residential	1928	Good example of Colonial Revival style.
33 Highland Ave.	Residential	Residential	1875	Original portion of structure, incorporating Tuckahoe marble is intact.
29 Highland Ave.	Residential	2 Fam Res	1881	Very late local example of Italianate Revival style.
28 Highland Ave.	Residential	Residential	1875	One of four homes built by a Civil War veteran named Kelly. Structure retains much of its original character.
26 Highland Ave.	Residential	Residential	1890	Retains original character.
22 Highland Ave.	Residential	Residential	1890	Retains much original character.
1 Highland Ave.	Residential	Res/Comm	1890	Original configuration illustrative of late 19th century residential development.
23 Hall Ave.	Residential	Residential	1905	Some original character intact.
22 Hall Ave.	Residential	Residential	1880	Structure retains original character. Street was once known as Nanny Goat Lane.
19 Hall Ave.	Residential	Residential	1865	In an area of older buildings that have been variously altered, this one is more intact than others.
10 Hall Ave.	Residential	Residential	1890	Retains some original character.
8 Hall Ave.	Residential	Residential	1910	Local example of American Four-Square style.
69 Glen Rd.	MF Res.	MF Res	1928	Early MF residential structure, designed in Mission Revival style, primarily intact.
56 Glen Rd.	Residential	Residential	1910	Illustrative of early 20th century residential development.
42 Glen Rd.	Residential	Residential	1912	Structure retains original character.
13-15 Franklin St.	Residential	Residential	1910	Retains some original character.
16 Caldwell St.	Residential	Residential	1876	Retains a great deal of original character. Only mansard roof in area. Well preserved example of French Second Empire style.

7.3 POLICIES

7-1 Support the Eastchester Historical Society's efforts to preserve, and educate the public about the town's rich heritage.

7-2 Expand upon the county's initial investigations to determine Register eligible properties and nominate appropriate buildings.

7-3 Identify architecturally significant buildings in addition to historically significant sites.

7-4 Explore the adoption of a landmark ordinance.

7-5 Initiate a program of visually identifying historically and architecturally significant buildings and sites.

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