

SUFFOLK COUNTY-OWNED  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES  
STATUS AND CONDITION REPORT 2011



SOCIETY FOR THE PRESERVATION OF LONG ISLAND ANTIQUITIES  
(SPLIA)

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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

Through a long established program of acquisition, Suffolk County maintains an impressive collection of historic properties built from the eighteenth to the twentieth century. The collection covers a broad spectrum of the area's history: early manor houses, farmsteads, sporting clubs, estates, and service buildings such as schools, grist mills, stores, and a lighthouse. These properties are often associated with parkland and are stewarded by the Suffolk County Department of Parks, Recreation and Conservation through its Office of Historic Services ("Historic Services"). Their preservation is mandated through dedication or listing to the Suffolk County Historic Trust ("Historic Trust"), and custodianship, typically resting with the Parks Department, may be entrusted to private organizations through written agreement on a case-by-case basis.

Conceptually, the Historic Trust is a well-designed program for heritage preservation. It outlines a systematic approach for the protection of historic and scenic resources in county ownership, and establishes procedures for evaluation and future uses. In reality, however, the Historic Trust faces challenges to achieving its full potential. In particular, the program suffers from the County's inability to provide long-range care for its properties. This is due largely to: an Historic Services staff working beyond capacity; a funding outpaced by needs; lack of capacity among friends groups and other custodians, and continued acquisition without planning.

Despite these challenges, historic properties associated with the Historic Trust are surviving relatively well. Several have resources in good to excellent condition, some generate moderate revenue, and custodian groups, when present, often contribute financially to operations and restoration. About half of the properties are presented to the public by friends groups or non-profits that typically provide tours and other community-oriented educational programming. Historic buildings also provide housing and office space for government agencies and educational institutions.

In improving historic sites and funding their maintenance needs, Historic Services has demonstrated creativity and vision. Its operations, however, are stretched too thin for the County's stewardship to be an exemplary program.

This report, prepared by the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, is part of a larger, ongoing study of historic Long Island properties in public ownership. Focused on Suffolk County holdings maintained by the Parks Department through its Historic Trust, this report strives to offer a comprehensive view of the program while identifying successful County initiatives, areas of concern, and steps that could be taken in future planning. Addressed aspects include current conditions, uses, management, and the status of friends or affiliated user groups. Findings are based on a field survey conducted in 2008-09 (included in this report), interviews with friends groups, general research, and information provided by Historic Services. Summaries of sites and background information on the Trust, Historic Services, and County actions have been provided to establish context. Recommendations are drawn from the analysis of current County activities vis-à-vis best practices.

## Background

### The Suffolk County Historic Trust

Established in 1972, the Suffolk County Historic Trust maintains county-owned properties with distinctive historical and/or aesthetic significance. Its purpose is to protect them from inappropriate uses or encroachment and to establish preservation protocols for future service and care. The Historic Trust policy is administered by the Suffolk County Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). Under advisement from a standing committee – a group that includes two voting members of the Council and is referred to as the “Historic Trust Committee” – the CEQ assigns Historic Trust status to properties owned by the County. While the Historic Trust’s charter allows the Council to advance recommendations for County acquisitions, typically, the CEQ responds to planning steps for acquisition initiated by the legislature. Following the CEQ’s determination, a final resolution from the legislature enters the property into the Suffolk County Historic Trust.

The purpose, policies, and procedures relating to properties included in the Historic Trust are outlined in the *Suffolk County Historic Trust Manual*. Depending on degree of significance, properties may be listed or dedicated to the Suffolk County Historic Trust. Listing usually applies to resources of lesser significance placed into Historic Services oversight with limited constraints over use. *Dedication* applies to resources of greater significance and requires that they be assigned, upfront, a use and preservation category to ensure historic character is maintained. Dedication also institutes management and adaptive reuse procedures, as well as the requirement of a countywide referendum to alter categories, sell, or otherwise dispose of such properties. A property with several resources may have both listed and dedicated elements. Associated resources that are neither listed nor dedicated remain under the management of the Suffolk County Parks Department and receive advisory input from Historic Services.

Historic Trust dedication dictates how specific structures may be used at a property. As many properties contain several resources (i.e. a farm complex with house, outbuildings, and other farm-related structures), one or more use categories are assigned to each element. As outlined in the Historic Trust Manual, these categories include:

- Museum (the most restrictive), requiring the new use be related to or interpretive of the historic use (i.e. period house or educational center)
- Functional (the most flexible), allowing for adaptive residential or public uses as well as office or museum functions
- Office for county or other organizational use.

Also outlined in the Manual are preservation categories that define a property’s significance in order to direct long-term maintenance plans. Historic and scenic elements are assigned to one or more categories depending on what contributes to significance. (For example, landscape features may be critical to defining the significance of a sporting club.) The Trust’s preservation categories include:

- Historic Agricultural Lands – landscape features related to rural heritage
- Archaeological – significant features located under ground or water
- Architectural – features related to design and construction

- Boundary Ditches and lopped tree fences – distinct man-made landscape features
- Context and setting – any ancillary feature
- Exceptional – used to identify historic/scenic features not otherwise specified
- Landscape Features – trees and shrubs, gardens; the natural setting
- Terrain – geological features

By establishing levels of designation, categories of use, and preservation requirements, dedication to the Historic Trust protects while providing flexibility in planning for interpretation and reuse. Highly significant buildings and landscape features receive the greatest controls over change, while contributing secondary structures are less restricted.

## Office of Historic Services

The Office of Historic Services is a division of the Suffolk County Department of Parks Recreation and Conservation. It was created in 1979-80 through recommendations made by the Historic Trust and is currently staffed by three full-time employees: a director and two assistant directors. Additionally, Historic Service's budget covers salaries and wages of several county employees who provide support to the Office but are not under the supervision of its director. This includes three staff members at the Parks Contracts Department and four full-time staff in the Parks Maintenance Division.

Historic Services is responsible for the administration, restoration, and maintenance of all Historic Trust properties held by the Parks Department. This includes property management, daily maintenance, long range planning, and coordination with support groups and custodians. Through its director –a non-voting member of the CEQ – the Office also facilitates Historic Trust Committee procedures (such as evaluating potential historic properties and assigning use and preservation categories) and is responsible for the implementation of its policies.

The 2011 operating budget for Historic Services was \$1.423 million, with \$464,000 allocated towards maintenance and restoration and \$959,000 for supporting staff and administrative costs. For several years, the Office also received a percentage of the county's 0.75% hotel/motel tax (established in 1992) to supplement its maintenance and restoration budget.<sup>1</sup> This funding stream however, ceased to be supplemental when the tax was raised to 3% in 2009 and the County revised the program's allocations. Currently, all operations at Historic Services are entirely funded by its portion of the hotel/motel tax, and despite the percentage increase, this has resulted in less overall revenue for the program.

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<sup>1</sup> The purpose of the hotel/motel tax is to supplement tourism initiatives: 24% of the total 3% supports the Long Island Convention & Visitor's Bureau in Suffolk County; 10% goes to cultural programs and activities relevant to the tourism; 10% supports the Vanderbilt Museum; 8% supports other museums and historical societies, and the remainder, 48% funds operations at the Office of Historic Services.

## Summary of Sites

Properties with historic association maintained by the Suffolk County Parks Department include 202 structures at 28 sites within or adjacent to 11,000 acres of parkland throughout the county.<sup>2</sup> Of these, 23 locations contain resources that are either dedicated or listed to the Historic Trust (nineteen with mostly dedicated resources and four carrying listed status only). Structures at another three locations have been assigned use and preservation categories but are awaiting final legislative resolutions (Farmingville Historic District, the Isaac Mills House, and Theodore Roosevelt County Park); one (Old Field Farm) is pending review by the Suffolk County Historic Trust Committee; and another (Prosser Pines County Park) has a dedicated landscape but structures are still under review.

Additionally, Historic Services may comment on man-made or archaeological features within certain parks that are deemed ineligible for dedication or listing. Among these are: Cedar Beach County Park, Cordwood Landing, Froehlich Farm, Indian Island Golf Course) and the Chandler Estate which was lost to arson before its review by the Historic Trust Committee. These properties were not surveyed for this report. The Vanderbilt Museum and Planetarium – formerly the William Kissam Vanderbilt II estate – has also been excluded. Bequeathed with an endowment to the county after Vanderbilt’s death in 1944, it predates the formation of the County Parks Department (1966) and is maintained by the County Legislature through a Board of Directors. Operating under a different management structure, it is subject only to advisory input from Historic Services.

### List of Sites

The Big Duck (D)	Prosser Pines County Park (D; PR)
Black Duck Lodge (D)	Robert Cushman Murphy County Park (L)
Blydenburgh County Park Historic District (D)	Robinson Duck Farm County Park (L)
Brookside County Park (D)	Sagtikos Manor County Park (D)
Cedar Point County Park (D)	Saint James General Store (D)
Coindre Hall (West Neck Farm) (D)	Scully Estate (Werholme) (D)
W.S. Commerdinger Jr. County Park (L)	Suffolk Lodge Historic District (D/L)
Deepwells Farm County Park (D)	Theodore Roosevelt County Park (PD)
Elwood School House (D)	Timber Point Golf Course (D)
Farmingville Historic District (PD)	Van Bourgondien County Park (D)
Flanders Club (D/L)	West Hills County Park (D/L)
Inlet Pond County Park (L)	West Sayville Golf Course (Meadow Edge) (D)
Isaac Mills House, St. James (PD)	Yaphank Historic District (D/L)
Meadow Croft (Roosevelt Estate) (D)	(D: Dedicated; L: Listed; PD: Pending dedication; PR: Pending review)
Old Field Farm (PR)	

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<sup>2</sup> This number refers only to extant structures and excludes surviving foundations, landscape features, and lost buildings planned for reconstruction.

## Uses

Almost all Suffolk County properties associated with the Historic Trust that are maintained by the Parks Department are connected to parkland and all but three consist of multiple structures, typically in the range of three to six. Actual uses vary among sites depending on building type and use designation. A typical example is the Blydenburgh County Park Historic District. Occupying twenty-three acres within a 600-acre park, the district consists of six extant structures assigned museum and/or functional uses. Of these, one is a combination house museum and office, another is a private residence, two are vacant, and the remaining two provide work, office, and storage space for user groups. Buildings with museum designations are the most restricted in terms of allowing alterations for programming. While they are not required to be house museums, they must be maintained so that they could be interpreted at a future time. Resources with functional designations at the same site however can accommodate a greater degree of change.

Of the twenty-eight Historic Trust properties surveyed, ten have buildings that operate as museums: seven house museums, a maritime museum, and two museum/retail operations run by the county (the Big Duck and the St. James General Store). There are also three sites currently closed to the public that are planned for museum interpretation: the Cedar Point Lighthouse, Third House – to be operated by the County, and the Commerdinger House). Additionally, the Farmingville Historic District is open for tours by appointment only, and the Suffolk County Police Historical Society operates a museum that is unrelated to its site at the Yaphank Garage. In total, fifteen sites maintain buildings for history programming – a little over half of the properties surveyed.

Two County-owned historic site remain vacant: the Elwood School and the previously mentioned Commerdinger house. County offices occupy four sites: Third House and the West Sayville and Timber Point golf courses (used for Parks Department offices), and Suffolk Lodge (headquarters for the Police Department). Buildings at the golf courses also serve private catering operations, and West Sayville additionally hosts the Long Island Maritime Museum and provides the Development Disabilities Institute with the use of a greenhouse. Other properties provide county employee housing and/or serve non-for-profit user groups typically oriented towards environmental, cultural, and/or social interests.

Through the County's housing program, twenty-four buildings at sixteen surveyed sites are rented as residences primarily to County employees. Located throughout the collection maintained by the Parks Department, they produce a moderate-income stream for the County's general fund. The program also helps to prevent vandalism and in eight cases they assure historic sites will not be vacant. Nonetheless, vacancy remains an issue: About 35 useable buildings (excluding small accessories and interpreted structures like out-houses and sheds) are currently vacant at fifteen occupied sites. Add the two vacant sites previously mentioned and approximately two-thirds of all surveyed properties contain vacant structures.

## Status and Condition

The status and condition of historic properties maintained by Historic Services vary considerably. Factoring issues include: conditions at the time of acquisition; the size and number of resources; length of time in county ownership; and changes in funding streams year to year. Terms of lease agreements with operators and the vitality of friends groups when present are also factors. In general Historic Services struggles to maintain Historic Trust properties and increasingly relies on partnerships and custodial contracts for maintenance needs.

The majority of structures are residential in scale and constructed of wood and occasionally, stucco. Regular maintenance is straightforward, concentrating on painting, roofing and maintaining foundation integrity. Exceptions are the Cedar Point Lighthouse, the Scully Estate, and Coindre Hall (containing large masonry structures with complex structural and/or decorative elements) and twenty-seven substantial wooden buildings (like Sagtikos Manor and the Blydenburgh Mill) that pre-date the Civil War and require expertise in historic building systems.

SPLIA site surveys and professional assessments maintained by Historic Services indicate that the condition of most historic structures range from fair to good with twenty-two resources (out of 198) in excellent condition, thirty-three in poor condition, and five verging on collapse. Eight sites have all structures maintained in good or better condition while four contain structures in fair to poor condition only.

As expected, occupied buildings (both dedicated and listed) are typically in better condition than unoccupied buildings, and locations with a large number of resources (six or more) will have both good and poor conditions present. At such sites, principal historic buildings and those that are habitable are more likely to be in better condition than their accessories which are not easily adapted for reuse. In some instances principal resources can be found in poor condition. These are usually structures maintained by the Parks Department for more than thirty years that are large and/or require specialized restoration treatments (i.e. Horan House at Timber Point, and the fire-damaged granite Cedar Point Lighthouse located in a beach erosion zone). Additionally, four locales identify collapsed museum designated accessory buildings that are “to be rebuilt.” Twelve in total, they are located at Blydenburgh County Park, Farmingville Historic District, Meadowcroft, and the Yaphank Historic District.

Currently nine properties, including one of the vacant sites listed earlier, have friends groups endeavoring to provide support through fundraising and educational activities. Such affiliations are not necessarily an indication of good physical condition: Out of the nine, four are challenged by resources no longer safe for public access (Cedar Point Light, the Commerdinger House, and the Farmingville and Yaphank Historic Districts), and none with the exception of Deepwells Farm, can claim to have all resources programmed and in good condition. Friends groups, however, often emerge in response to preservation needs and, over the long term, can be a catalyst for improvements. For example, Old Field Farm has significantly benefited from fifteen years of restoration initiatives and programming in the equestrian arts provided by its associated friends.



Other not-for-profit groups occupy eleven additional Historic Trust properties. The condition of these resources ranges from fair to good. Programming is active and generally more varied than at those associated with friends groups only. Through their custodial agreements, occupants are required to interpret their sites, but this is often minimal, representing a missed opportunity to showcase Suffolk County Trust properties in partnership with mission-based organizations.

The twenty-five buildings that serve the County's residential rental program are currently in good condition. These are mainly domestic buildings with "functional" Trust designations that permit minor interior alterations. Technically open to all eligible renters, they are principally occupied by County employees who are given the first option to rent. Units are currently offered at a sliding scale, usually falling below fair market value to compensate for day-to-day maintenance responsibilities. Buildings directly associated with County activities, like the Big Duck and the two golf clubhouses are also in good condition.

National Register listing or eligibility applies to half the properties associated with the Suffolk County Historic Trust and appears equally among those with friends groups and those without. As outlined in its manual, the Trust's definition of historic significance is derived primarily from National Register criteria. When possible, the County also accesses the matching grant opportunities that are associated with the program. With the majority of National Register determinations (twelve out of sixteen) occurring after County acquisition, it is clear that state and federal landmark recognition is seen as a benefit to preservation planning.

## County Initiatives

The Office of Historic Services, working with the Historic Trust Committee of the Council on Environmental Quality endeavors to find ways to improve the stewardship of historic properties maintained by the Parks Department. In the last five years the Office has been particularly active in improving policies and procedures in response to current needs, and has explored new approaches to position historic properties for fundraising opportunities. The following are the County's principal initiatives.

### Suffolk County Historic Trust Manual Update

Historic Services and the Historic Trust Committee revised the Historic Trust Manual in 2010 to make it user-friendlier and address issues that emerged since the document was last updated in 1974. Outdated information, such as the recommendation for creating the Office of Historic Services, has been removed and more specific procedural information added, such as a clearer explanation of dedication procedures and the process of rescinding Historic Trust dedication. Key additions include a policy for managing collections, identification of "listed" status (formalized by resolution in 2007), and a new chapter on management that identifies stewardship and custodial responsibilities and relationships.

Besides the obvious benefit of revising an outdated document, the Committee's update of the Historic Trust Manual is intended to provide a deeper understanding of the program's purpose and procedures. The Committee's hope in this endeavor is to provide better guidance to the Legislature and other County agencies when dealing with historic properties: whether initiating planning steps for acquisition or directing funds for maintenance and restoration. The document is also now available for download at the Suffolk County website under Planning Department publications.

### Condition Assessments

Historic Services keeps an updated conditions log for all historic resources at each location to track maintenance needs and changes in status, establish work priorities, and guide annual funding allocations. As needs consistently exceed funding, the log provides a quick big-picture view that identifies where funds will make the greatest impact. Often, such work translates into general maintenance (such as roof repair) and stabilization measures (for, example, water drainage or structural problems) that arrest deterioration but do not address existing damage or underlying causes.

Recognizing the benefit of defining the scope of large-scale improvements to future planning efforts, Historic Services commissioned an intensive level condition survey for several structures at twenty locations. Property selection for the survey was based on degrees of historic significance and levels of deterioration. Entitled *Historic Structure Survey*, the document was produced in two phases by Ehasz Giacalone Architects PC between 2006 and 2007. Besides general information on history and status, the survey provided assessments on conditions, structural issues, building systems, alterations, and areas of critical need. It also included treatment recommendations based on the *Secretary of Interior Standards* as well as cost estimates for three levels of intervention.

With condition assessments in hand, the Parks Department is better positioned to guide rehabilitation projects and work with partners in fundraising. The survey also provides real numbers that support budgetary requests. As recommended in the revised Manual, Historic Services hopes to procure studies for more of its structures, however this initiative has been placed on hold due to budget considerations.

## Housing Program

Created when the Parks Department was established in 1966, the County's residential rental program predates the Historic Trust. Formally restructured in 2004, the program applies to all rentable properties maintained by Suffolk County Parks including those listed or dedicated to the Historic Trust. It is administered through a standing committee within the Parks Department that meets as needed and includes representatives from the CEQ and Historic Services.

While funds generated by the program are not used to support the preservation of historic properties, the protection from vandalism and daily maintenance afforded by regular occupancy is highly beneficial. This was demonstrated when the County legislature voted to raise all rental units to fair market value in 2008. An increase in vacancy, due largely to priced-out tenants and a lack of willing market-rate renters, placed greater maintenance demands on the Parks Department. The benefit of decreased rent in exchange for work became clear and the earlier adjustable rent system was reinstated in 2009.

In addition to rentals, some Historic Trust properties provide dormitory-style housing for seasonal Parks Department employees associated with the County's Endangered Species Program. Operating at seventeen county-owned coastal areas, the program focuses on the study and protection of the region's endangered nesting shorebirds (terns and plovers specifically) and operates in partnership with the Long Island Field Office of the United States Fish and Wildlife Services and the New York Department of Environmental Conservation. The program's benefit lies in supporting environmental study; another instance where County-owned buildings contribute to the public good.

## Suffolk County Parks Foundation

Chartered in 2006, the Suffolk County Parks Foundation, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to support – through fundraising, special projects, and education – the protection and enhancement of natural and historic resources within Suffolk County Parks. The organization was established by the Parks Department and is engaged in a public-private partnership similar to the Friends of Westchester County Parks, the Historic House Trust in New York City, and the Natural Heritage Trust of New York State. Under this model, an independent not-for-profit works closely with a government agency to support publicly-owned properties on or near parkland. The two often coordinate to pinpoint fundraising priorities and the not-for-profit may receive technical support (i.e. office space, staff time, and website services) from the agency. In addition, such collection-focused not-for-profits frequently work with local friends groups and others associated with specific sites.

In terms of public awareness, the Parks Foundation has been relatively quiet over the last five years although it has accomplished some fundraising initiatives and has hosted training programs to assist friends groups with capacity building. The Foundation's website is basic, featuring information

about the group and 2011 Earth Day fund-raising activities. There is little information about past or upcoming programs or initiatives and no information or links to any Historic Trust sites or parks. Like many not-for-profits the Foundation's development has been slow. However, with the right strategy, it can play a significant role in improving relations with resident groups; raising awareness of the Historic Trust properties; and finding funds for improvements.

## Certified Local Government

In 2007 the County applied for Certified Local Government (CLG) status from New York State. The program – federally sponsored and administered by State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) – provides guidance and support (both technical and financial) to participating municipalities engaged in the protection of historic properties. Developed to encourage the inclusion of preservation in local land use management, the program maintains standards for eligibility and offers benefits that include technical preservation assistance and legal advice; direct involvement in SHPO programs; training opportunities; and reimbursement grants for projects related to identifying, evaluating, and protecting a community's historic resources. The County's application was rejected.

## Resident Curator Program

Also explored by Historic Services was the establishment of a Resident Curator Program. Pioneered in Maryland in 1982 and recently adopted by the State of New York, the program allows agencies to retain ownership of under-used historic buildings, while transferring the cost of rehabilitation and maintenance to their occupants. Unlike traditional housing programs where an owner collects rental income and is responsible for the upkeep of a property, this program provides rent-free, long-term leases to people (and sometimes organizations) who take direct responsibility for the rehabilitation and maintenance. Prospective resident curators typically apply with a scope of work and agree to invest funds and/or in-kind services towards rehabilitation.

After assembling preliminary information in 2007, Historic Services failed to follow through on the feasibility of implementing such a program. This was due to the loss of administrative staff midway through research and concerns about the program's long-term dependence on partners. Further investigation would be needed to: assess the program's success in places that have adopted it; address the possibility of delinquent curators; and discern how the County's housing resolution (which does not allow long-term rental or custodial contracts) could accommodate a program based on long-term lease agreements.

### **Note:**

In October 2011, Suffolk County Legislator, Wayne Horsley introduced Resolution No.1815-2011 to initiate an "Historic Structure Restoration Pilot Program" that closely resembles curatorship. The resolution authorizes the Departments of Public Works and Parks to prepare and issue Requests for Proposals or Expressions of Interest in order to seek "responsible private parties" to invest in the restoration of county-owned historic properties for future occupancy as licensees. The program would apply to five properties (The Elwood Schoolhouse, the Commerdinger House, the Robinson Duck Farm, the Black Duck Lodge, and the Robert Cushman Murphy Davis House) and would permit residential and/or non-residential uses based on evaluated appropriateness.

## Ongoing Issues

Historic Services has demonstrated its commitment to responsible stewardship of the County's historic properties. The initiatives listed above represent a judicious approach to administrative improvement that recognizes the need for policy guidelines, improvements in planning, and working within fiscal limitations. For its clarity of purpose and ability to outline management procedures, the Historic Trust can be considered a success.

Unfortunately, following acquisition, the County has fallen short on its commitment to its historic resources. Too many sites are in fair to poor condition due to delayed maintenance and restoration. Funding gaps only accelerate deterioration and increase costs. This is further aggravated by the acquisition of additional historic properties without increasing Historic Services' staff and scope of operation. Currently dealing at capacity, the Office is unable to address broader management issues such as long-term uses and increasing public engagement. While the County benefits to some degree from private/public partnerships, it has yet to establish its role in cultivating strong partners. Furthermore, the County fails to promote the Historic Trust collection as a benefit to Suffolk County residents. In greater detail, the following are ongoing issues:

### Acquisitions and Planning for Stewardship

When the Office of Historic Services was created in 1980, its primary purpose was to support the Suffolk County Historic Trust and oversee the physical care of historic properties maintained by the Parks Department. At the time, Suffolk County Parks managed thirteen historic properties that were acquired with parkland. None had been formally assigned Historic Trust status and little thought was given to planning for future uses beyond house museums. Since then, the original thirteen and an additional fifteen properties have come under the Historic Trust's authority. Recognizing that the Parks Department cannot fully support or program these sites on its own, Historic Services faces new demands for planning and management coordination.

Suffolk County's struggle to maintain its historic resources reflects a condition endemic throughout the country; so much so, that in 2007 the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Rockefeller Brothers Fund hosted a three-day forum at the Pocantico Conference Center at Kykuit near Tarrytown, New York to engage leading experts in a discussion about the state of historic sites in public ownership.<sup>3</sup> Issues raised included the wide spread presence of financial instability, poor stewardship, and the increasing failure of traditional programming models to meaningfully engage the public.<sup>4</sup> Forum participants confirmed the value of these historic places, but agreed future sustainability would depend on stewardship that reached beyond established models such as museum interpretation and heritage tourism.

To some extent, Suffolk County has already engaged in such creative collaborations, but not as the result of County planning or outreach. Splashes of Hope at Coindre Hall and the Seatuck Associa-

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<sup>3</sup> For a summary of forum findings, see Forum Journal: America's Historic Sites at a Crossroads. National Trust for Historic Preservation, vol. 22, no. 03, Spring 2008

<sup>4</sup> Vaughan, James. "Introduction: the Call for a National Conversation," Forum Journal: America's Historic Sites at a Crossroads. National Trust for Historic Preservation, vol. 22, no. 03, Spring 2008, p. 6.

tion at the Suffolk County Environmental Center (Scully Estate) both demonstrate how historic sites can host other activities and both were the result of prospective users approaching the County.<sup>5</sup> However, in general the County has been unable to steer properties towards innovative partnerships. This is due to a lack of “big picture” planning and Historic Services’ limited capacity to transition from caretaker to coordinator of a comprehensive stewardship program. Such a transition would require additional staff and increased support, but it would greatly enhance the Historic Trust as a program and aid the County in assessing the feasibility of future acquisitions.

## Custodian Relationships

Suffolk County’s increased dependence on partnerships also follows a national trend among government agencies that hold historic properties in public trust.<sup>6</sup> Through custodial and other types of contracts, these relationships are considered essential to improving the status of publicly owned historic properties. Success, however, depends on viable partners and the ability to develop agreements that successfully accommodate the needs of users while protecting the integrity of resources.

Suffolk County’s Office of Historic Services cooperates with friends and other occupant groups to the best of its abilities. The Office is responsive to custodian initiatives and is open to partnership arrangements that go beyond house museums, but it does not have the ability to guide preservation planning or facilitate the development of effective partners. At present, most of the County’s partners are volunteer organizations that have no professional staff, small operating budgets, and limited programming.<sup>7</sup> Within their capacities, partners make valuable contributions. The Sagtikos Manor and Yaphank Historical Societies, for example, have clearly demonstrated a commitment to improving conditions and programming at their sites, but performance can be inconsistent among groups. For example, site interpretation can be weak and fundraising (typically small-scale and focused on discrete projects) rarely reflects strategic goals. Training in historic resource management would greatly benefit these groups, as would the opportunity for professional development. In failing to cultivate partner improvement, the County in effect fails to capitalize on its partners as a resource.

## Contract Procedures

To some degree, the County’s contract terms and procedures may contribute to limitations. Out of nineteen historic properties associated with non-profit custodians, eight are friends groups dedicated to a site’s interpretation and improvement and nine are environmental or cultural groups, like the Audubon Society and Ducks Unlimited – dedicated to wetlands and waterfowl conservation, that use sites for programming.<sup>8</sup> Currently, the County uses the same contract for both types of non-

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<sup>5</sup> Coindre Hall is a multi-use site that accommodates two not-for-profit organizations, the Town of Huntington, and the catering firm, Lessings (see surveys for details). Its reference here excludes the for-profit concession agreement.

<sup>6</sup> New York State provides one example: The February 2011 annual report of the State Council of Parks identifies as a priority the need to cultivate and strengthen a range of public-private partnerships to increase support for state parks and historic sites.

<sup>7</sup> Seatuck Environmental Association the Long Island Maritime Museum, and the arts organization, Splashes of Hope are three exceptions that maintain professional staff and are more developed.

<sup>8</sup> Additionally, the County concessions (using a different contract type) the catering firm, Lessings, at three locations and partners with two educational institutions: Cornell University and the Developmental Disabilities Institute.

profit organizations and establishes its main purpose as assisting in the restoration, maintenance, and management of a property. Among other stipulations, the contract requires that all on-site fundraising benefit the maintenance and programming of the occupied resource.<sup>9</sup> Depending on how the term “programming” is defined, this condition may be prohibitive, especially to organizations whose missions are not directly tied to a property’s improvement. It may prevent custodians from using sites to raise endowments, or generating funds for organizational development that would help them become more effective stewards.

While the County is on the right tract with its custodian contracts, adjustments are needed to account for different kinds of partners and to provide a degree of customization. Contracts must also be issued in a more timely fashion. Under the existing bureaucratic structure, custodial contracts are not prioritized by the County’s contract division and compete with others on a first come, first served basis.

## Diminished Funding for Historic Services

In 1992, when Suffolk County instituted the 0.75% hotel/motel tax to support tourism, cultural programs, and historic resources, the Office of Historic Services was responsible for twenty-four of the surveyed historic sites and was already challenged by a daunting backlog of maintenance and restoration needs. By the time the tax program was altered in 2009, Historic Services had gained five more properties (comprising twenty-two additional structures) and was just beginning to make headway in resource stabilization. Unable to meet the demands resulting from added properties, the Office had come to rely heavily on the supplemental funding provided by the tax. Averaging \$300,000 to \$400,000 per year by the 2000s, it was reserved for capital improvements – making possible phases I and II of the County’s Historic Structure Survey report and serving as a source for matching grants as well.

After the hotel/motel tax was raised to 3% in 2009, Historic Services anticipated greater opportunities to significantly address its backlog of restoration and renovation projects that are now estimated to be in excess of \$4 million.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, the County Legislature opted to reassign the Office’s portion of the tax (48% of the 3%) to cover all operations. As a result, the increased, but no longer supplemental, tax revenue yielded less funding for Historic Services in 2010. Given that the program already operates under austere conditions, this reduction significantly undermines progress.

## Insufficient Public Awareness

Despite an impressive array of properties, a laudable mission, and solid administrative process, Suffolk County fails to promote its Historic Trust properties as a distinct program or collection. It has no recognizable advertising in print or on the web and tepid public information to generate interest or support. The Parks Department website, for example, provides just a few paragraphs describing

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<sup>9</sup> See standard Suffolk County Custodial License Agreement, Exhibit A: General Terms and Conditions, 23: “Fundraising/Contribution.”

<sup>10</sup> Derived from the Historic Structure Survey prepared by Ehasz Giacalone Architects PC in 2006-7, this \$4 million total represents the sum of budget estimates established for bottom-line stabilizations to arrest deterioration. It applies only to surveyed structures considered to be in critical need (less than half of all resources in the Historic Trust collection).



its historic properties and only a partial list of properties and links. Pages are minimally illustrated and the link system is inconsistent. There is no background on the Historic Trust, its relationship to Historic Services, or its partnerships with friends groups and other users.

Information about the Parks Department and its historic properties is inconsistent at partner organization websites: some include the Parks Department seal with little explanation of the relationship with the Historic Trust while others refer to the County in background information or make no reference to it at all. In most cases the Historic Trust is not mentioned, and nowhere are the properties presented in a manner that conveys their significance to the public.



## Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of recent County initiatives and the effects of ongoing issues, the following recommendations have been developed to help to improve the management of historic properties associated with the Suffolk County Historic Trust.

### Augment Support for Historic Services

- **Increase Historic Services staff.** This will support the Office's growing management responsibilities in long range planning, research, maintenance, and partnerships.
- **Restore Historic Services' hotel motel/tax allocation to supplemental status.** Returning this allocation to supplemental status will provide funding for Historic Services' to develop preservation plans and address maintenance needs more expeditiously. It will also: provide greater leverage for matching grants; expedite improvements to better position properties for new types of users; and support the preparation of feasibility studies.

### Work with Custodians to Cultivate Capacity and Best Practices- Be a Leader

- **Provide a package of standardized background information for orientation and guidance.** This will allow partners to make more lasting and effective contributions to a property's improvement by: providing guidelines for appropriate uses, establishing maintenance procedures, and informing plans for future restoration, care, and programming. Information packages may include:
  - property histories and/or National Register reports
  - architectural drawings
  - identified significant architectural and/or landscape features
  - existing planning documents and/or condition assessments,
  - basic requirements for interpretation and maintenance
  - sample materials such as tours, interpretive brochures, disaster plans, and successful adaptive reuses where applicable.
- **Facilitate development and professionalization.** Volunteer not-for-profit custodians associated with historic buildings share common goals and face similar organizational challenges. Most would benefit from training in areas such as grant writing and capacity building but do not have the funds or guidance to engage such services individually. Acting as a lead collaborator, Suffolk County has the opportunity to foster strong partners by coordinating educational workshops and creating a setting where custodians can develop colleague relationships. This can lead to shared resources, information, services, and potentially costs.<sup>11</sup> New York City's Historic House Trust has already adopted this approach with its partners and Pennsylvania's Bureau of Historic Sites and Museums (part of its Historical and Museum Commission) has identified a similar course of action under recommendations made in its 2009 self-study, *Planning Our Future*.<sup>12</sup> Organizations that

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<sup>11</sup> This role need not be taken by Historic Services but may be better served by the Suffolk County Parks Foundation (see below).

<sup>12</sup> Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Bureau of Historic Sites. *Planning Our Future: Sustainability Committee Final Report*, March 4, 2009.

may offer the County guidance, resources, or model programs include the:

- Museum Association of New York (organizational development support)
  - National Trust for Historic Preservation (training modules)
  - National Preservation Institute (conservation; restoration)
  - Greater Hudson Heritage (training modules)
  - Fair Media Council (outreach and networking)
- **Encourage master and strategic planning.** This will help establish shared long-term goals and a roadmap for restoration, appropriate alteration, and adaptive reuse. It will also position resources more favorably for fundraising.

### Broaden the scope of partnerships

- **Explore new types of custodians and uses.** Recent studies on the sustainability of publicly-owned historic sites point to the need for increased relevance to local communities. Traditional house museum interpretation alone is often considered too static and limited a use for today's visitors and it runs the risk of redundancy when too many sites in one area tell a similar story.<sup>13</sup> As a result, experts in the field see the need to expand the model, reserving historic interpretation for outstanding or unusual examples and allowing for more hybrid uses where history acts as a background for other cultural activities.<sup>14</sup> Hybridized uses could also accommodate partnerships with for-profit groups and local government agencies provided they comply with requirements associated with the Historic Trust's maintenance, use, and public access policies. To better define, and therefore regulate an expanded network of partners, Suffolk County may look to the New York State Council of Parks which formally identified six types of partnerships: non-profits, friends groups, concessions and intergovernmental occupants, as well gifts/grants, and sponsorships.
- **Revisit the Resident Curator Program.** As a supplement to the County's housing program, resident curatorship would provide the County with the option of engaging resident occupants for Historic Trust properties without an initial outlay of rehabilitation costs. This may be a useful alternative for certain types of future acquisitions (i.e. those with advanced deterioration but historically important) and may serve as a solution for current vacancies. In advocating for the program's establishment in the New York State Park system, the Preservation League of New York State reported that, since the state of Maryland pioneered the program in 1982, it has gained over \$8 million in improvements to its publicly-owned properties.

#### **See note on page 10:**

Further development of the County's "Historic Structure Restoration Pilot Program" should draw on the experience and assessments of other municipalities that have implemented curatorship programs.

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<sup>13</sup> For more discussion of the fate of house museums see: Godfrey, Marion A. "Historic House Museums: An Embarrassment of Riches?" *Forum Journal*, National Trust for Historic Preservation: vol.22, no. 03. Spring 2008.

<sup>14</sup> Examples of this hybrid use in the Suffolk County Historic Trust are Old Field Farm and Suffolk County Environmental Center at the Scully Estate. In the former case, the current recreational use is allied to historic significance but is not interpretive. In the latter, historic interpretation is part of educational programming but is not the site's primary use.

## Improve contract procedures

- **Revisit contract language.** Following federal and state examples, the County should develop contracts that can better accommodate custodian needs, limitations and differences.<sup>15</sup> They should be based on a standardized form that clearly outlines expectations and restrictions, but also allows for a degree of customization.
- **Consider additional templates for different custodian types.** Create additional contract templates to better recognize differences among custodians: friends groups vs. other non-profit custodians, food concessions vs. other types of for-profit operations. Such contracts should continue to uphold the County's responsibility to: protect its historic resources' physical integrity; ensure public access; provide for improvements; and address liability
- **Issue contracts in a more timely fashion.** This will allow custodians to better satisfy their responsibilities and will create better relationships.
- **Dedicate one employee in the County's contract division to deal exclusively with historic properties.** This will create a staff specialist for historic properties who can effectively customize and refine custodial and concession agreements, and expedite the process.

## Increase public awareness

- **Identify the Historic Trust as a valuable County program.** This will help the public (and potential supporters) to understand what the Historic Trust is and how it benefits county residents. The effort should emphasize the Historic Trust as a tangible collection through which the County protects and promotes heritage appreciation and supports mission-based partners.
- **Standardize public information about the Historic Trust in print media and the web.** Modeling on the Historic House Trust of New York City, the County should create a recognizable brand for its collection and develop an exclusive web presence that provides maps and information that is user-friendly and engaging. Web materials should also connect to custodian sites where possible.
- **Connect with regional initiatives that promote tourism and heritage appreciation.** This will broaden the Historic Trust's reach into related cultural interests and create opportunities for partnerships in marketing and outreach. The Long Island North Shore Heritage Area, for example, is dedicated to fostering cultural and economic vitality through heritage preservation and thematic connections. Its recently launched audio tour, George Washington's Culper Spy Ring, represents a collaborative program that ties several Long Island revolutionary war sites together. Easily accessed by phone, the tour encourages visitation to specific sites and enriches experience through broadened historical context. Other regional initiatives that may provide partnership opportunities are the Long Island Wine Council and Gold Coast Mansions/Long Island History.

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<sup>15</sup> According to a Preservation Action Legislative Update (October 22, 2010), the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks recently outlined the development of a specialized contract template with standardized provisions to negotiate particular organizational needs in response to complaints from friends group. At the state level in 2009, New York's Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation revised its policy on public/private partnerships to establish guidelines that would better assist the agency's management and decision-making.

## Activate the Suffolk County Parks Foundation

As a supporting entity, the Suffolk County Parks Foundation's role could be augmented to address needs that might otherwise fall to Historic Services: in particular, coordinating with custodians, improving public outreach, and program development. Success would require dedicated staff and work could include:

- Serving as a liaison between Historic Services and custodian groups to develop sound policies based on feedback.
- Coordinating training programs, roundtable meetings, and collective fundraising initiatives to empower not for profit partners.
- Developing a strong public identity for the Historic Trust and managing web-based and other media outreach in coordination with custodians.
- Developing programs that enhance connections between Historic Trust properties.
- Cultivating and vetting potential new custodians for historic properties

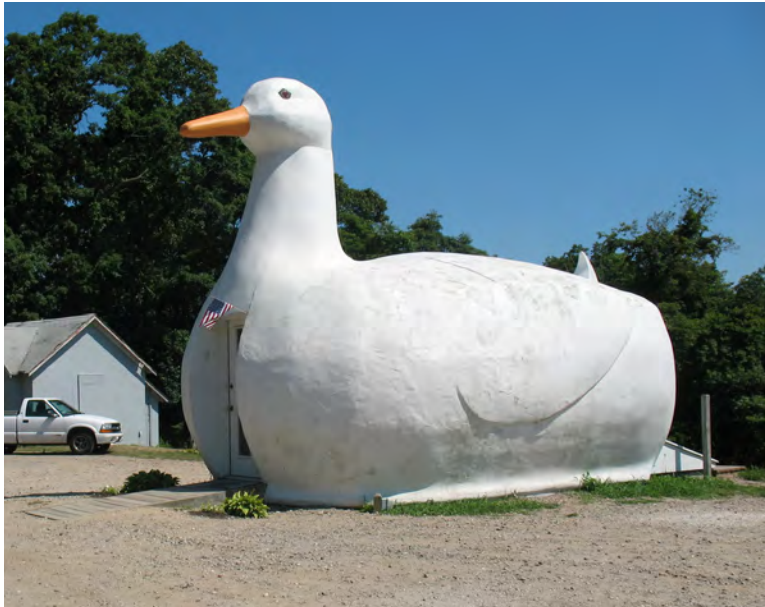
## Revisit Certified Local Government

With further dialog, Suffolk County may be able to achieve Certified Local Government status. The program's grant opportunities could potentially provide funding assistance for a variety of needs including: condition surveys for specific properties, educational and/or training programs for partner organizations, promotional materials, and website improvements. In addition, CLG status could also serve the historic preservation component of the County's regional planning initiative.

# Site Surveys

## The Big Duck

### Town of Southampton Big Duck Park, Flanders



*Friends/Users(s): None  
(Friends of the Big Duck focused on  
town owned park structures only)*  
*Hours: Tues – Sat, 10-5; Sun 2–5*  
*Acquired: 1987*  
*National Register: Yes, 1997*  
*SCHT Status: Dedicated, 1987*  
*(museum/functional)*  
*Acreage: 0*

#### Buildings

*The Big Duck (1931): Store/Museum; concrete on wire mesh over wood frame*

#### History

The Big Duck is one of the most famous examples of roadside architecture in the country. Built in 1931 for the duck farmer Martin Mauer, it was constructed by local builders (George Reeve, John Smith, and Merlin Yeager) using plans developed by Broadway set designers (the Collins Brothers). The Big Duck operated as a poultry retail store until 1984, and was donated to Suffolk County by owners, Kia and Pouran Eshghi in 1987. Originally located on West Main Street in Riverhead, the Big Duck was moved three times: First by Mauer in 1937 to a new duck ranch on Route 24 (the structure's current location); next by Suffolk County in 1988 to Sears-Bellows Pond Park 3.5 miles southeast on the same road; and last in 2007 when it returned to the Mauer site (made into a town park in 2001) and was reset on its previous foundation. At that time, a new National Register listing – Big Duck Ranch – was created to include the remaining Mauer duck farm structures: a brooder barn, storage barn, and secondary retail shop.

#### Status

As one of the best known examples of roadside architecture in the country, the Big Duck receives national attention. While the Big Duck



remains a dedicated Suffolk County Historic Trust property, its associated duck ranch structures are not. Maintenance of the big duck remains a county responsibility while the grounds and three associated structures are maintained by the Town of Southampton. The Big Duck functions as gift shop run by the county with displays about its history squeezed in amongst merchandise. The Friends of the Big Duck are currently fundraising to help restore the significantly deteriorated duck ranch structures.

#### Condition

The Big Duck is in excellent condition. Some minor spalling is in evidence at the exterior and there is a history of cracking traced by repairs all over the surface. The lens of one of the Duck's eyes, made from Model-T taillights, is missing: a small but noticeable detail.

## Black Duck Lodge Hubbard County Park, Flanders



*Friends/User(s):*  
*Ducks Unlimited*  
*Hours: By appointment only*  
*Acquired: 1971*  
*National Register: Eligible*  
*SCHT Status: Dedicated, 1984*  
*(functional/museum)*  
*Acreage: 1200*

#### Buildings

*Black Duck Lodge* (c. 1860): Residence, partially vacant; shingle on wood frame with stone foundation.

*Storage Shed*: clapboard on wood frame

*Hatchery*: Collapsing; wood frame

#### History

From the mid-eighteenth century to 1924, the property, which includes a small family burial ground, was associated with Hubbard Family. Elias Hubbard and son, Norman, built the extant circa 1860 Italianate farmhouse-turned-hunting-lodge, and operated a farm that included a cordwood plantation. The house was expanded with a new kitchen wing around 1875, and in 1924, the Hubbards sold it to E. F. Hutton. Planning



to use the property as a hunting lodge, Hutton modified the landscape (creating duck blinds) and further expanded the house in the Colonial revival style to include a breezeway and rooms on the second floor. Subsequent owner, Sidney Allen, sold the property to Suffolk County in 1971. In 1977 and again in 1980, the main house was severely vandalized with damage to the roof, destruction of almost every door, removal of kitchen and bathroom fixtures, and loss of stairway railings, shutters and front porch columns. Repairs following these events included a new roof and rehabilitation of the north wing to serve as a residence.

### Status

The majority of the Black Duck Lodge is vacant except for the caretaker's apartment created in 1982 which provides the only full-time presence at the site. In addition, the national non-profit organization, Ducks Unlimited, entered a custodial agreement with the county in 2004 to use a portion the site for research and programming in wetlands and waterfowl conservation.

### Condition

*Black Duck Lodge:* In fair to good condition, a 2007 grant for \$500,000 helped restore the building's exterior. Safety concerns at the vandalized interior have been mitigated but areas not immediately associated with the caretaker's apartment remain in poor (but stable) condition: Walls covered by graffiti, are damaged throughout and lost fittings have not been replaced. The north wing caretaker's residence was not available for inspection, but it is presumed to be in very good condition as rehabilitation was fairly recent.

*Storage Shed:* The interior of this building was unavailable for inspection. The exterior is in fair condition and needs a new roof.



## Blydenburgh Historic District Blydenburgh County Park, Smithtown



*Friends/User(s):*

*Long Island Greenbelt Trail Conference  
Suffolk County Archaeological Ass.*

*Hours: Saturdays, 1-4  
(tours of farmhouse)*

*Acquired: 1965*

*National Register: Yes, 1983*

*SCHT Status: Dedicated, 1983  
(museum/functional)*

*Acreage: 627 (23 Historic Trust dedicated)*

## Buildings

*New Mill* (1798): Vacant; shingle on post and beam on stone foundation and piers

*Miller's House* (1801): Vacant; shingled wood frame

*Farm Cottage* (1865): Residence; board and batton on wood frame with brick foundation

*Farmhouse* (1821): House museum, offices, residence; shingle on wood frame

*Workshop*: Classroom and workshop; shingle on wood frame

*Ice House* (1870): Classroom; board and batton on wood frame with brick foundation

## History

The 1798 New Mill (with a second story added in the 1870s) was the first building erected on the site. This was closely followed by the Miller's House built circa 1801. In 1821, Isaac Blydenburgh built the farmhouse and the property remained in the family for over a century during which time the Ice House, Farm Cottage, barn, and various out buildings were added. The Blydenburghs sold the property to investment banker, David Weld, in 1938 who, after raising his family there, sold the property to Suffolk County in 1965.

## Status

The Blydenburgh historic district includes 23 acres of Trust-dedicated parkland. The Farmhouse serves as a house museum, the headquarters for the Long Island Greenbelt Trail Conference, and a residence. Though not a dedicated friends group, the Conference conducts public tours on Saturdays and frequently hosts school groups. Its office space occupies the second floor west wing while the housing unit occupies the east side of the floor. The workshop and ice house serve the Suffolk County Archeological Association's Colonial Life Program. While the Millers House is vacant, the Farm Cottage is used for housing through the County Housing Program. Working with the two resident non-profits, the County Parks Department endeavors to bring additional programming to the site whenever possible. In addition, the office of Historic Services identifies a corn crib, shed, and two privies as structures to be rebuilt.

## Condition

*Farmhouse* (Blydenburgh-Weld House): Overall in good condition, however sagging suggests structural issues at the meeting point between the original house and its east side addition. At the interior, plaster walls are cracking and in some instances, falling apart.

*Farm Cottage*: Overall good condition established through exterior inspection only.

*New Mill*: The building is in fair condition. Foundation piers and timbering restored in 2010. Removed windows provide air circulation but exposes interior to direct weather. The water wheel is currently stored in another location. Restoration is slowly underway.

*Miller's House*: Interior inspection was not possible, but the house is in realtive good condition. The wood shingle roof is aged but sound





and the stacked portico was rebuilt in 2011. Other wood trim is rotted however, and many architectural details are lost.

*Workshop:* Exterior is in fair condition: The asphalt roof is nearing the end of its life and the lack of gutters encourages moisture problems at the foundation. The building's interior was not inspected but Office of Historic Services records indicate it was restored by the Archaeological Association for use as a carpentry shop.

*Ice House:* The exterior is in very good condition with no significant deterioration visible. The sub-grade floor has been filled in to provide classroom space and a blacksmith shop.

## Brookside County Park, Sayville



*Friends/Use(s):*  
Great South Bay Audubon Society  
*Hours:* No regular hours  
*Acquired:* 1999  
*National Register:* No  
*SCHT Status:* Dedicated 2007  
(museum/functional; 1950s shed not)  
*Acreage:* 6 (Historic Trust dedicated)

### Buildings

*Gate House* (1897, 1950): Offices; shingled wood frame on cinder block foundation

*Shed* (1897): Storage; wood panel wood frame

*Entrance Bridge* (1897): Functional

*Pond Bridge* (1897): Functional

*East Pond Dam* (1897): Functional

*West Pond Dam* (1897): Functional

### History

Samuel Willet Green, father of Long Island architect Isaac Henry Green, owned the land that would become "Brookside" in the late 1800s. After Samuel's death in 1893, ownership passed to the younger Green who developed the property into an estate and maintained it until he died in 1937. Isaac Green designed all the estate structures and its park-inspired landscape including several footbridges and dams. The main house, built in 1897, was destroyed by fire in 1970. The remaining gate-house, occupied by the Thurber family until the County purchased the

property in 1998, was altered through the years to include an enclosed porch and a 1950s garage addition to its rear.

### Status

Although Brookside's association with Isaac Henry Green is recognized at the site, the property's main attraction is its landscape and the wildlife attracted to its freshwater wetlands. The Audubon Society, using the gatehouse for offices, sponsors tours and programs, and fundraises to maintain the house and grounds on an ongoing basis. Currently, there are plans to remove the partial enclosure at the front porch.

### Condition

*Gatehouse:* The building is in good to fair condition. It appears that flashing and gutter systems associated with a recent roof replacement in 2003, have failed: Mold and water stains appear at the porch ceiling and walls, and is also visible along cornices throughout the structure.

*Shed:* The shed is in fair condition. It lacks any paint and has sustained water damaged.

*1950s Shed:* This shed is in good condition. Some of the lower shingles are rotting and should be replaced.



## Cedar Point Lighthouse (Cedar Island Lighthouse) Cedar Point County Park, East Hampton



*Friends/User(s):*  
Long Island Chap. US Lighthouse Soc.  
*Hours:* None, currently  
*Acquired:* 1967  
*National Register:* Yes, 2002  
*SCHT Status:* Dedicated, 1984  
(museum/functional)  
*Acreage:* 60

### Buildings

*Lighthouse* (1868): Vacant; rustic granite masonry with iron railings

*Generator House* (1890): Vacant; brick masonry with tin roof

*Foreman's House* (c.1930): Residence

## History

Erected in 1868 and used for navigation to Sag Harbor, the Cedar Point Lighthouse is a replacement of an earlier wooden lighthouse built in 1838. It is considered a fine example of Boston granite-style construction and, while its architect is unknown, its builder, W & J Beattie, likely used material from his quarry in Fall River, Massachusetts. The light was decommissioned in 1934 after the federal government erected an automatic beacon nearby and was subsequently sold to Phalen Beale, a New York attorney who leased the adjacent property as a hunting preserve and had an interest in local maritime history. The structure was originally located on an island but the hurricane of 1938 (filling the inlet with sand and debris) has caused the namesake property to be interchangeably referred to as Cedar Point and Cedar Island. After passing through several private owners, the site was purchased by Suffolk County in 1967, and in 1974, the interior and roof burned in a suspected case of arson.



## Status

Situated on little more than a sand spit, the lighthouse has been perpetually threatened by erosion, and its restoration and potential use is complicated by environmental concerns related to habitat protection. Interest in its restoration began in 1988 when an individual proposed a resident-curator agreement. The proposal's failure to consider public access and historic accuracy in the restoration yielded objections that halted the project. Subsequently, Suffolk County approved the use of the lighthouse as an extension of the Sag Harbor Whaling Museum. While funds were allocated to restore the building, the plan never came to fruition due to access issues. The Long Island Chapter of the United States Lighthouse Society (established in 2000) has since partnered with the County to raise money for restoration, and more recently, a chapter subcommittee (the Cedar Island Restoration Project) has branched off to concentrate exclusively on this lighthouse.



## Condition

*Lighthouse:* Overall condition is poor. Surviving as a shell without floors or interior support, the effects of the 1974 fire have not been addressed beyond stabilization through interior bracing, roof replacement, and masonry-filled fenestration. A 2006 report documents cracks in the exterior bearing walls, unsound interior bracing, and cracks in door and window lintels and sills. The chimney is leaning, cast iron railings are severely rusted, and the 1974 asphalt roof has begun to fail leaving openings for water and animal infiltration.

*Generator House:* Restored in 2004 and in excellent condition.

*Foreman's House:* In good condition with new windows installed in 2005.



## Coindre Hall (West Neck Farm) Browns Road, Huntington



*Friends/User(s):*  
Splashes of Hope  
Town of Huntington  
Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Lessings (for-profit catering)  
*Hours:* By appointment only  
*Acquired:* 1973  
*National Register:* Yes, 1985  
*SCHT Status:* Dedicated, 1988  
(museum/functional)  
*Acreage:* 33

### Buildings

*Main House* (1912): Event space, classrooms, residence, and offices;  
stucco over terra-cotta block  
*Garage* (1912): Storage; brick  
*Pump houses* (1912): Vacant; brick  
*Boathouse* (1912): Vacant; stucco over terra-cotta block

### History

Commonly known as Coindre Hall, the French Chateau style West Neck Farm was the summer residence of George McKesson Brown. Designed in 1912 by Clarence Luce (the architect of Striver's Row in Harlem) the main house featured central heating, forced air ventilation, a telephone system and an indoor pool. During the Great Depression Brown moved into the caretaker's house where he stayed in residence until about 1960. The remainder of the estate was sold to the Brothers of the Sacred Heart who converted it for use as a boy's boarding school. Wings were added to the rear of the main house in 1938 and the school opened 1939 as Coindre Hall, named after the Order's founder. A gymnasium was added in 1969 and in 1973, Suffolk County acquired the property. The Harbor Arts Center occupied the building during the 1970s, and from 1982 to 1990 it was used by the Eagle Hill School for children with special needs.



### Status

Coindre Hall, which has not operated at its fullest potential since 1990, is currently moving towards improvement. The building's primary spaces are available for events through the catering firm, Lessing's, and Splashes of Hope, an arts organization, occupies one of the rear wings and provides tours of the main house. Recently, the Town of Huntington

established a recreational program at the gymnasium and maintains offices and a meeting room in the main house. The Cornell Cooperative Extension also maintains an office in the main house for its Western Suffolk Marine Education Program.

### Condition

*Main House:* The main house has undergone many alterations through the years. Recent work includes window restoration and a roof upgrade in 2000, a new HVAC system installed in 2003, and interior paint in 2005. It is in good condition, although several problems were noted in the 2006 condition survey, including ongoing stucco deterioration, failing masonry, particularly at the chimneys, and extensive water damage at portions of the building.

*Boathouse:* Severely damaged by fire in the 1970s, the building received little attention until the 1990s at which time structural deficiencies were stabilized. Following another decade of deterioration, restoration of the building commenced in 2010 through a partnership between the County and the Town of Huntington.

*Garage:* This building is in good condition and had a new roof in 2005.



## Commerdinger House Walter S. Commerdinger, Jr. County Park, Nesconset



### *Friends User(s):*

*W.S. Commerdinger Junior Park Preservation Society, Inc.*

*Hours: None currently*

*Acquired: 2006*

*National Register: in process*

*SCHT Status: Listed, 2007 (functional);*

*chicken coop and privy pending review*

*Acreage: 5.7*

### Buildings

*House (c. 1800, with later additions): Vacant; stucco over wood frame*

*Chicken coop (c. 1930): Vacant; stucco over wood frame*

*Privy: Vertical boards over wood frame*

## History

Built by Jacob Newton around 1800, the property passed through a number of owners and the house has undergone several additions over the years. The McCormick family held the property for the first half of the twentieth century, until it was purchased by the Commerdinger family around 1953. Walter S. Commerdinger was active in local government and served as the Nesconset Postmaster. Suffolk County acquired the property in 2006.

## Status

The house and chicken coop are currently vacant, but a new custodial contract has been awarded to the Commerdinger Park Preservation Society to improve the property and bring it into active use. Coordinating events at the site, the group has engaged both the Audubon Society and the Boy Scouts to provide programming. Fundraising efforts are currently directed towards a condition report and historical research and reapplication to the National Register using the McCormick era of occupancy as the period of significance (as opposed to the early nineteenth century which led to the rejection of an earlier nomination)..



## Condition

*House:* In poor condition, the asphalt roof is frayed and delaminated in places, and stucco surfaces are cracked particularly in areas associated with flashing. Interior inspection suggests water problems –carpets are stained and mortar deterioration at the chimney visible from the attic. There have been incidents of minor vandalism in years past and the house is currently boarded to prevent further damage.

*Chicken coop:* This structure is in poor condition. The roof appears unstable with detached trim boards and several openings that allow animal intrusion. Interior inspection was not possible.

## Deepwells Farm County Park, Saint James



### *Friends/User(s):*

*Deepwells Farm Historical Society  
Honey Hills Garden Club  
Smithtown Garden Club  
Acoustic Long Island*

*Hours: Sundays from 1-4, Memorial  
Day through Labor Day*

*Acquired: 1989*

*National Register: Yes, 1973*

*SCHT Status: Dedicated, 1996  
(museum/functional)*

*Acreage: 13.2 (Historic Trust dedicated)*



## Buildings

*Main House* (1845): House museum; clapboard on wood frame with stone foundation

*Garage*: House museum accessory, storage; clapboard on wood frame

*Garden Shed*: Functional; clapboard on wood frame

*Water Tower*: Functional; wood plank drum on metal frame

## History

Designed in the Greek revival style, Deepwells Farms was built in 1845 for Joel Smith, a descendent of Richard “Bull” Smith, the founder of Smithtown. Remaining in the Smith family until 1905, it was then sold to William Gaynor (New York City Mayor from 1910 to 1913) who used the property as a summer home until his death in 1913 and who is believed to have given Deepwells its name after the 125 foot well found on the site. The building was then altered by its next owner, Winthrop Taylor who combined two side parlors and expanded the kitchen, dining room, and the rear porch. Since then little has changed, although the wooden front porch floor was replaced with flagstone around 1950. By the late 1980s, the property was in disrepair and had come into the hands of developers. In 1988, Suffolk County purchased the main house portion of the larger property and undertook a full restoration in the 1990s.



## Status

Although Deepwells Farm has an active friends group, the museum is underutilized. Access is limited to four hours a week with periodic fundraising events, such as crafts fairs and concerts, providing additional opportunities to visit. Fundraising is directed towards specific restoration projects (i.e. window shutter repair), but there is no master plan to establish priorities. A 1995 designer showcase provided a lift to the interior, but also damaged some historic woodwork. Currently, the house is fully furnished with reproduction furniture and wallpapers. Formerly staffed by Suffolk County employees, the building is now operated by volunteers drawn from the Historical Society and local community. Other groups that utilize the site include Acoustic Long Island, the Honey Hills Garden Club and the Smithtown Garden Club.



## Condition

*Main House*: Largely the result of its 1990s restoration supported by regular upkeep maintained by its friends group, Deepwells Farm is in very good condition. A metal roof was replaced, and new HVAC, plumbing and electric were installed in 1995. Unresolved problems with the current HVAC system result in periodic leaks which are repaired as needed but have damaged ceilings, walls and finishes. A 2007 condition report identifies potential structural concerns related to a bowed exterior wall and a sagging roof ridge at the north addition, as well as sagging and sloping floors in several locations. Moisture problems were also identified in the basement.

*Garage*: Appears in good condition, with maintained paint job and recently replaced roof

*Garden Shed*: in good condition

*Water Tower*: Appears to be in good condition.

## Elwood School House (The Little Red Schoolhouse) Cuba Hill Road, Elwood



*Friends/User(s): None*  
*Hours: By appointment only*  
*Acquired: 1986*  
*National Register: Eligible*  
*SCHT Status: Dedicated, 1987*  
*(functional)*  
*Acreage: 1*

### Buildings

*School (1917):* Vacant; cedar shingle over wood frame with concrete foundation.

### History

Constructed in 1917, the building's second floor was left unfinished until an increase in student population warranted its completion. With four classrooms and indoor plumbing, the school reached its capacity in 1930. In 1955, the construction of a new elementary school rendered the building obsolete although it was used periodically for overflow classrooms and Elwood School District administrative offices until it was sold to Suffolk County in 1986. Purchased with the intent of serving community groups, the county rented to the Art League of Long Island through a lease managed by The Friends of Long Island Heritage in the 1990s. The building has been vacant since the early 2000s when the Art League moved.

### Status

Currently vacant, there are no plans for the structure's use. Its functional use category opens the building to several possibilities but to date, user groups have not come forward. The county envisions a restoration of the structure with some interpretation of its past as a schoolhouse.

### Condition

The exterior appears in good to fair condition. In 1995, \$100,000 was allocated for repairs of the roof, cladding, and HVAC systems (including a new boiler). Installation of exterior wood shingles (replacing asbestos) was completed in 2006. Trim has not been repainted or repaired where needed and some windows are boarded up while others are broken. In-





terior conditions are poor: post-1950s “improvements,” including drop ceilings, air conditioning, lighting, sprinklers, and electrical wiring have caused extensive damage to the original pressed tin ceiling. Floors are buckling in places and interior finishes such as doors and lighting fixtures have been removed.

## Farmingville Historic District Portion Road, Farmingville



*Friends/User(s):*

*Farmingville Historical Society*

*Hours: By appointment only*

*Acquired: 1985*

*National Register: School House only, 1988*

*SCHT Status: Pending resolution (museum)*

*Acreage: 2*

### Buildings

*School House* (1850): Museum; clapboard on wood frame with stone rubble foundation.

*Elijah Terry House* (1820; reconstructed in 1990): Vacant; shingle on wood frame with stone foundation.

### History

The Greek revival style Farmingville School house (aka the Bald Hill Schoolhouse) is a single-room school that operated from 1850 until centralized school districts were created in 1929. From 1858-1890 it also served the Farmingville Congregational Church. In 1985, it was donated to Suffolk County by the Farmingville Reunion Association. The Elijah Terry House is a reconstruction of the house owned by the district's first teacher which was moved to the site in 1986 and lost to fire in 1987. In 1998, two privies and a wood shed associated with the school collapsed.

### Status

The School House is open to tours by appointment while the Terry House remains vacant. The Reunion Association also uses the site for an annual picnic. The Farmingville Historical Society is currently fundraising for restoration. This is another site where collapsed buildings are identified as “to be rebuilt.”



## Condition

*Schoolhouse:* The exterior appears to be in good to fair condition. Paint is deteriorated and the building's foundation is settlement with deteriorated mortar. New windows, roof, and HVAC system were installed prior to 2006, and a new retaining wall is forthcoming. An important historic detail remaining is an early chalkboard.

*Terry House:* The building's exterior is in relatively good condition although wood trim is in need of paint. The interior is unfinished.

## Flanders Club Hubbard County Park, Flanders



*Friends/User(s):*  
*Ducks Unlimited*  
*Hours: By appointment only*  
*Acquired: 1971*  
*National Register: No.*  
*SCHT Status: Dedicated/Listed, 2011*  
*(functional)*  
*Acreage: 430*

## Buildings

*Clubhouse* (c. 1890-1910): dormitory; shingle over wood frame

*Cottages 1-6* (c. 1940s): Seasonal residences/vacant; shingle or clapboard over wood frame

*Garage:* Storage; concrete block

*Storage Sheds 1-2:* Workshops; clapboard over wood frame

*Kennel:* Vacant; plywood over wood frame

*Brooder House:* Vacant; plank over wood frame

*Stable:* Vacant; plank over wood frame

## History

Formed in 1890, the Flanders Club was as a members-only hunting club that provided overnight accommodations. Around 1940, the club was purchased by a group of hunters who added six cottages to increase guest accommodations. Club member, R. Brinkley Smithers (the founder of Ducks Unlimited) later purchased the property in 1963 and added a kitchen and additional bedrooms to the clubhouse. In 1971, Smithers donated the property to Suffolk County but maintained an operator's lease

for 25 years. Smithers died shortly before the lease ended in 1996, but Ducks Unlimited continues to use the site for programming.

### Status

Located in Hubbard County Park, the Flanders Club is in the vicinity of the Black Duck Lodge which is also used by Ducks Unlimited (See above, Black Duck Lodge). It is one of the more successfully programmed facilities of the Suffolk County Historic Trust: During summer months, the County runs an Endangered Species Program in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Long Island Office and several buildings are used by Ducks Unlimited for environmental education programs. One cottage is leased to a tenant while the rest are vacant.

### Condition

*Clubhouse:* In fair to good condition, the exterior shows signs of wear. While the wood shingle roof has recently been replaced, some wall shingles are loose and the rear porch shows signs of rot. The exterior is also in need of paint. The interior is in much better condition. Used for housing, the building also serves programming during summer months.

*Cottages 1-6:* Condition varies from fair to good. Cottages 1 and 3 have had roofs replaced in 2007 and 2008. In 2005, Ducks Unlimited assisted in restoration and roof replacement for cottage 4.

*Garage:* In relative good condition although cracks were noted at mortar joints. Some wood shingle cladding is in need of repair.

*Storage Sheds 1-2:* Used by Ducks Unlimited, these structures are in good condition and are well-maintained.

*Kennel:* In fair condition with a few missing windows.

*Brooder House:* In poor condition, interior walls are collapsing and plants are growing in and around the structure.

*Generator Building:* Not surveyed at this time. County condition assessment is fair.

*Stable:* Not surveyed. County condition assessment is fair.



## Inlet Pond County Park, Greenport



*Friends/User(s):*  
North Fork Audubon Society  
*Hours:* None  
*Acquired:* White House, 1886; other, 1998  
*National Register:* No  
*SCHT Status:* Listed, 2007  
(functional; museum for outhouse only)  
*Acreage:* 50



## Buildings

*White House* (c. 1840): Residence; clapboard over wood frame with stone foundation

*Red House*: Offices, residence; shingle over wood frame

*Outhouse*: Wood plank

## History

Built circa 1840, the White House had a kitchen added in the latter part of that century, and a second floor added more recently. Likewise, the central block of the red house appears to be of the same period (mid-nineteenth century) while flanking single story additions are likely from the mid-twentieth century. Little more information is available about either house.

## Status

Suffolk County acquired this property primarily for open space and wildlife preservation. Consequently, the history of the site is given secondary status and there are no plans to research or interpret structures. The houses are used as rental properties; the White House is a County employee residence and the Red House provides a second floor residence and first-floor offices for the North Fork Audubon Society which maintains the park's nature trails.

## Condition

*White House*: This building appears to be in good condition. The interior was not accessible.

*Red House*: In good condition, the building's first floor is occasionally used for public programs but primarily serves as office space.



## Isaac Mills House Mills Pond Road, St. James



*Friends/User(s)*: None  
*Hours*: None, currently  
*Acquired* 2007  
*National Register*: Yes, 1973 (Mills Pond  
Historic District)  
*SCHT Status*: Pending CEQ dedication  
resolution (museum/functional)  
*Acreage*: 3

## Buildings

*House* (c. 1719-50): Vacant/housing in west wing; shingle over wood frame with stone foundation

*Shed 1*: Vacant; clapboard over wood frame

*Shed 2*: Vacant; clapboard over wood frame

*Outhouse*: Vacant; clapboard over wood frame

*Ice House Foundation*: Vacant; brick

## History

This property is associated with the historic farming hamlet established by Timothy Mills (b. 1667) that is identified in the National Register report as the Mills Pond District. Little information is available on this house: It was originally constructed circa 1719-50 and was home to Isaac Mills as well as Thomas Helme Mills. It appears that the house was enlarged and several stylistic façade elements such as the turreted bay windows, dormers, and porches are clearly not a part of the original construction. Some evidence suggests the kitchen roof was also raised.

## Status

Currently occupied at the west wing only, future use plans include providing office space at the east wing. The County is currently seeking restoration funds for the main house, but there are no plans for the accessory buildings.

## Condition

*House*: In good condition, improvements include a new heating and gas system, and a new roof and drainage system installed in 2009-10.

*Sheds and outhouse*: Both sheds and the outhouse are in good condition but the presence of mildew suggests moisture issues.

*Icehouse*: A ruin composed of the remnants of the brick foundation.



## Meadow Croft (Roosevelt Estate) Sans-Souci Lakes County Nature Preserve, Sayville



### *Friends/User(s):*

*Bayport Heritage Association*  
*Sayville Garden Club*  
*Neighbors & Gardeners of Bayport/Blue Point*

*Hours: Sunday tours at 1:00 and 2:00, June through October*

*Acquired: 1974*

*National Register: Yes, 1987*

*SCHT Status: Dedicated, 1982*  
*(museum/functional)*

*Acreage: 60*



## Buildings

*Main House* (1891): House museum; clapboard over wood frame

*Carriage House* (1891): Museum accessory; clapboard over wood frame

*Stable* (1924): Vacant; stucco over wood frame

*Auto House* (1903): Museum accessory; stucco over wood frame

*Artist's Studio* (c. 1900): Museum accessory; clapboard over wood frame

*Caretaker's Cottage* (1906): Residence; shingle over wood frame

## History

Built in 1891 adjacent to the Browns River, Meadow Croft was the summer home of John Ellis Roosevelt, a first cousin to Theodore Roosevelt. The Colonial revival main house was designed by architect Isaac Henry Green and has undergone several additions. Technologically advanced for its time, the house had electric lights, an elevator and indoor plumbing long before such luxuries were common. Gardens produced food for the residents and sheep were present on the grounds. In addition to the main house and accessory buildings, the site contains an early in-ground swimming pool. A portion of the stable that served as a barn was allowed to collapse and was removed in the late 1980s or early 1990s. Acquired by Suffolk County in 1974, Meadow Croft is the only remaining house of the three Roosevelt family homes in the immediate area.

## Status

The Bayport Heritage Association, a dedicated and active friends group, operates the site as a museum and continues to advocate and fundraise for further restoration. At the main house, historical accuracy is exemplary among the Suffolk County Historic Trust's properties, and many rooms contain original furnishings. Based on extant early photographs, several rooms are arranged as they were when the Roosevelts were in residence. In 2006, \$1 million in capital improvements were completed on the main house and among the many resources developed for the site is a historic landscape survey. The gardens are in good condition and are attended to by two groups of volunteer gardeners.

## Condition

*Main House:* With a new roof and a 2008 paint job, the building is in very good condition. Insect damage was noticed at a rear entrance newel post, but otherwise no other exterior deterioration was noted. The main rooms of the interior has been painstakingly restored, however, many of the upper level servant's quarters are in poor but stable condition. There are small cosmetic problems throughout the house such as missing balusters or missing moldings.

*Auto House:* The Auto House is in excellent condition.

*Stable:* Evaluated in 2006, the building was determined to be in imminent danger of collapse. Since then, there has been no noticeable intervention and the building shows continued deterioration, particularly at the roof, which sags in the center and is riddled with holes. Vines and other plants grow around and over the building.

*Carriage House:* Constructed at the same time as the main house this building is in good condition. The two-story building features a three-story water tower at one corner that was once capped by a wooden water



tank served by a windmill pump. Restored from a deteriorated state in 1991, it was used as a studio for an artists' group until the mid 2000s.

*Artist's Studio:* This small structure is in very good condition although it is surrounded by vegetation that could overtake the structure if it is not regularly trimmed. The interior appears to be in good condition.

*Caretaker's Cottage:* This two-story building served as the Roosevelt family's caretaker residence until 1989. In good condition, it is currently part of the Suffolk County Housing program. The interior of the building was inaccessible.

## Old Field Farm County Park, Setauket



*Friends/User(s):*  
*Old Field Farm, Ltd.*  
*Hours: Varies by event*  
*Acquired: 1990*  
*National Register: No*  
*SCHT Status: Pending review*  
*Acreage: 13*

### Buildings

*Grandstand and Main Ring (1931):* Functional; clapboard over wood frame

*Smythe Main U-Shaped Barn (1931):* Functional; clapboard over wood frame

*Smythe Stable (1931):* Functional; clapboard over wood frame

*Stables 1-2 (1931):* Vacant; clapboard over wood frame

*Stable 3 (1931):* Residence at east end, west end vacant: clapboard over wood frame

*Stable 4-14 (1931):* Functional; clapboard over wood frame

*Check-in booths (1931):* Functional; clapboard over wood frame

*Secretary Building (1931):* Functional; clapboard over wood frame

### History

The Old Field Horse Farm, previously known as the North Shore Horse Show Grounds, was constructed in 1931 by Ward Melville as a part of the Old Field Club. In the 1930s-40s, the club hosted the North Shore Horse Show, a major equestrian event at the time. The main barn and grandstand as well as some of the stables were designed by Richard H. Smythe, who also designed the Stony Brook Village Center. It passed through a number of owners, both public and private, before its sale to



Suffolk County in 1988. The site was constantly threatened by development until this arrangement was agreed upon.

### Status

With significant repairs completed between 1997 and 2007, this site is well-managed and well-utilized by Old Field Farm Ltd. Through its custodial contract, the operator is responsible for all utilities as well as the facility's restoration and general maintenance. Based on covenants established at the time of acquisition, the contract stipulates a maximum number of horse shows per year and restricts the number of horses permanently stabled at the site. Recent improvements include the restoration of the show ring, grandstand, main barn, fencing and landscaping.



### Condition

*Grandstand and Main Ring:* In excellent condition owing to restoration. Work includes new footing, drainage and a new fence.

*Smythe Main U-Shaped Barn:* In good condition.

*Smythe Stable:* In very good condition with a new roof and fresh paint applied in 2002-3.

*Stables 1-2:* restored in 2007, these buildings are in good condition

*Stable 3:* Restored in 2001, the caretaker's apartment is in good condition while the remainder of the building is in poor condition.

*Stables 4-14:* Stables are in poor condition with some on the verge of collapse. The CEQ has approved demolition for some of these structures stipulating that salvaged materials be used to repair other resources on the site.

*Check-in booths:* This building is in good condition.

*Secretary Building:* This building is in good condition.



## Prosser Pines County Park, Middle Island



*Friends/User(s):*

*None*

*Hours: None*

*Acquired: 1967*

*National Register: No*

*SCHT Status: Parkland dedicated 1984;*

*Buildings pending review*

*Acreage: 56*



## Buildings

*Dayton House* (c. 1790): Vacant; clapboard over wood frame

*Dayton Barn* (c. 1790): Vacant; clapboard over heavy timber frame with metal roof

*Privy* (c. 1830): Vacant; clapboard over wood frame

*Workshop* (c. 1860): Vacant; clapboard over wood frame

*Prosser Barn* (c. 1870): Storage; vertical boards over wood frame

*Shed 1* (c. 1880): Vacant; clapboard over wood frame

*Shed 2* (c. 1880): Vacant; clapboard over wood frame

*Shed 3* (c. 1880): Vacant; Vertical boards over wood frame

*Corn Shed* (c. 1900): Vacant; tin

*Bungalow 1* (c. 1930): Residence; clapboard over wood frame

*Bungalow 2* (c. 1930): Residence; clapboard over wood frame



## History

The late eighteenth century house and barn are all that remain of the William Brewster Dayton homestead. Dayton is reputed to have planted the property's namesake white pines around 1812 which are believed to be transplants from a local pine grove and the last existing native white pine grove on Long Island. The property was purchased by the Prosser family in the mid-nineteenth century and the area became known as "Prosser's Cathedral Pines." After the addition of several farm related outbuildings by the Prossers until circa 1930, Suffolk County purchased the property from the family in 1969.



## Status

The park grounds contain a network of hiking trails that are open to the public, but there is no program in place to use or interpret these domestic and agricultural structures. All are vacant except the two bungalows which are rented through the County's housing program.



## Condition

*Dayton era buildings:* In very poor condition, these are collapsing. A 2006 condition survey noted unsafe conditions and the urgent need for stabilization. The survey further noted that the barn, with its collapsing roof and leaning frame, contains farm equipment that may be historic in nature. The house's side porch roof and dormers have collapsed as well as a portion of the roof.

*Prosser Barn:* Stabilized by a 2003 asphalt roof replacement, the building is in fair condition.

*Remaining outbuildings:* In very poor condition. This includes the privy, the workshop, three wooden sheds (one of which mostly collapsed), and the tin shed which is heavily rusted throughout.

*Bungalows:* in very good condition: #2 was restored in 2004 and # 1 was improved in 2008 anticipating a new tenant.



## Robert Cushman Murphy County Park, Manorville



*Friends/User(s): None*  
*Hours: None*  
*Acquired: 1988*  
*National Register: No*  
*SCHT Status: Listed 2007 (functional)*  
*except houses 6, 7, and factory building*  
*Acreage: 2200*

### Buildings

(East end)

*House 1* (Gilbert Raynor House, c. 1945): Residence; shingle over wood frame with asphalt roof

*House 2* (c. 1840): Residence; shingle over wood frame; asphalt roof

*House 3* (c. 1840): Residence; shingle over wood frame

*House 4* (Davis House, c. 1820): Residence; shingle over wood frame w/clapboard & frame addition

*Garage* (c. 1920): Storage; clapboard over wood frame

(West end)

*House 5* (Stemler House): Residence; shingle over wood frame

*Stemmler Barn* (c. 1880): Vacant; vertical plank over wood frame with concrete block extension

*House 6*: Residence; stucco over wood frame

*House 7*: Residence; stucco over wood frame

*Factory Building*: Vacant; asphalt siding over wood frame



### History

Connected to the Long Island Pine Barrens, the park is a combination of two properties: that of George Warren Davis to the east and Louis Stemmler to the west. The oldest house is the Davis House (#4) which was moved by the family to its current location in 1950 with all the east end structures excluding House #1. Constructed in 1820, the Davis House was originally part of the Robinson farm site, known as Seven Oaks when Davis purchased it in 1877. Davis, a Wall Street banker, initially acquired the house and its outbuildings as a summer property, but after discovering wild cranberries he initiated a commercial cranberry operation. The business survived almost a century, passing through Davis' daughter and son-in-law and later his grandson until it yielded its last crop in 1969. No longer able to maintain the property by the late 1970s, the family sold a large portion to developers for a golf course, and later sold the remaining house acreage to Suffolk County in 1986.

The neighboring property, acquired by Suffolk County in 1988 and previously owned by Louis Stemler, also has a history related to factory production. The barn, constructed around 1880 as part of a hog operation, was later used by Stemler for the manufacture of bows and arrows. With a new factory added to a complex of three houses and the barn, the operation developed into the well-known brand that produced targets for the US Department of Defense in the Vietnam War era.

## Status

Robert Cushman Murphy County Park is identified as a “natural park” offering fishing, boating, hiking, and hunting. Associated with protected watershed property, preservation of open space rather than historic properties was the primary motive for acquiring these properties. Habitable structures serve as residences under the Suffolk County Housing Program.

## Condition

(East end)

*House 1:* Currently occupied, the house is in good condition. Paint is intact, and wood shingle siding in good repair although the roof appears to be at midlife. Interior access was not possible.

*Davis House (House 4):* In very poor condition, the building was stabilized in 2008 with the installation of a new roof. Portions of the house are unsafe and the front portico is collapsing. Shingle siding is extremely worn and covered with moss. Full restoration is not planned at this time, but many original and/or early interior features, including floor planks, wood trim, mantles, and windows survive.

*House 2:* Building is occupied and is in good condition with a roof near midlife.

*House 3:* Once a guest cottage, the building is in good to fair condition, with shingles showing mold and a collapsed gutter at the building’s front façade.

*Garage:* In fair condition with evident water damage and asphalt shingle roof in need of replacement. A slight sag was also visible at the rear central section. Paint is worn, siding shows damage, and hardware is rusting.

(West end)

*Stemler House (House 5):* House is in good condition although some roof tiles have begun to curl. Interior was not accessible.

*Stemler Barn:* With a pronounced lean, the building appears in danger of collapse and is in very poor condition. While safety concerns prevented interior access at this time, a 2006 Historic Structure Survey noted a “sagging of ridge and eave and rotting/insect damage of heavy timber frames.” Wood cladding is rotted at ground level.

*House 6:* Once a worker’s cottage, the occupied building is in overall good condition

*House 7:* Like its neighbor, this occupied worker’s cottage in good condition although roof tiles are showing some wear.

*Factory:* In very poor condition, this structure began to collapse in 2007. Only a small portion of the building is standing.





## Robinson Duck Farm County Park, Southaven



*Friends/User(s): None*  
*Hours: By appointment only*  
*Acquired: 1990*  
*National Register: No*  
*SCHT Status: Listed, 2007 (functional)*  
*except church foundation*  
*Acreage: 87*

### Buildings

*House 1: Residence; shingle over wood frame*

*House 2: Vacant; shingle over wood frame*

*House 3: Vacant; shingle over wood frame*

### History

A prominent Long Island duck farms, the Robinson Duck Farm was established in 1922 by Charles Robinson, and was known as the Carmen River Duck Farm during operation. The site was acquired in 1990 by Suffolk County; holdings include three houses and the foundation of the South Haven Church.

### Status

The Robinson Duck Farm property is surrounded by the 2,550-acre Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge and has been assessed for ecological restoration in 2009. Structures are located in what is now described as a cultural use area and the County will manage this site primarily for its environmental value. The three residences serve the County's Housing Program, and plans to utilize a portion of the barn for site activities are under consideration.



### Condition

*House 1: The exterior of the building appears to be in good condition. Interior inspection was not possible.*

*House 2: In fair condition at the exterior, wood shingles show signs of wear and the asphalt roof is deteriorated. Concrete steps are also deteriorated with openings at the risers.*

*House 3: Building is in fair condition although a new wood shingle roof was installed. Brick portico steps are deteriorated and unsafe. Vandalized interior requires general repairs.*

*Church Foundation: This site was not inspected.*

## Sagtikos Manor County Park, Bay Shore



*Friends/User(s):*  
*Sagtikos Manor Historical Society*  
*Hours: Summer: Sun, Wed, Thurs, Sat, 1-4*  
*Acquired: 2002*  
*National Register: 1976*  
*SCHT Status: Dedicated, 2007 (museum;*  
*carriage house: functional)*  
*Acreage: 10*

### Buildings

*Main House* (1692, 1772 and 1902): House museum; clapboard over wood frame with wood shingle roof and brick foundation.

*Buttery* (c. 1700): Museum accessory; brick masonry

*Carriage House* (c. 1924): Vacant; stucco and timbering over wood frame with wood shingle roof

*Garden House* (c. 1930): Storage; clapboard over wood frame with wood shingle roof

### History

An active dairy farm into the 1950s, Sagtikos Manor is associated with the van Cortlandt, Carll, Thompson, and Gardiner families and is considered the oldest house in the Town of Islip. Built for Stephanus Van Cortlandt (the first American born mayor of New York City), the original house dates to 1692 with the buttery following soon after in 1700. Significant expansions to the main house occurred in 1772 and again in 1902 when two wings, designed by architect Isaac Henry Green were added. Construction of the garden house, carriage house, and landscape followed in the 1920s-30s. In 1985, then owner, David Lion Gardiner, established the property as a private museum until it was sold to Suffolk County in 2002. It has been documented in correspondence that George Washington spent the night at this house in 1790.

### Status

The Sagtikos Manor Historical Society assists the County in restoration initiatives, collections management, and programming for the site. Formally, the Society addresses interior features that relate to interpretation while the County deals with mechanicals and exterior elements. The Society however frequently contributes to large capital improve-

ment projects and works with the County on grant-seeking initiatives. In addition, the Friends of the Manor Garden, a Society subcommittee, are dedicated to assisting with historic landscape restoration. The main house is in general good repair and a good portion of the interior has been restored although periods of significance are not always clear. Furnishings are mainly original. The Society recently added a new second floor room to its interpretive tour; is assisting the County in cataloging its artwork collection; and obtained a grant for conservation of a painting. Future plans include new education programs for school groups and further interpretation of second floor rooms. There are also plans to create a visitors' center in the Carriage House and the friends are currently raising funds. Restoration is largely on an as needed basis and there is no master plan for the house or site to date.

### Condition

*Main House:* Recent repairs include a rebuilt east porch, portico columns and shutter replacement (2007), new gutters and exterior painting (2006). Additionally, the roof was replaced in 1998 and HVAC was installed in 2005. Some damaged latticework below porches was noted, but otherwise, the structure is in very good condition. The first floor interior is in good condition and the friends are working on plaster repair on the upper floors.

*Buttery (Ice House):* Sitting mostly below grade, this structure appears to be in good to fair condition. With a new roof installed in 1998, it appears that degraded mortar, loose bricks, paint loss, and mold at lower levels result from ground moisture.

*Carriage House:* Consisting of animal stalls and a caretaker's apartment, this structure is in good to fair condition. While the wood shingle roof was replaced in 2005, the building still needs stucco and timbering repair as well as a protective paint covering. After many years of vacancy, the interior is deteriorated and needs restoration before it can be used again.

*Garden House:* Constructed of wood on a concrete slab, this structure is in good to fair condition. Plexiglass window pane replacements are weathered as is clapboard siding. The roof was replaced in 2005; however there appears to be a gap along the ridgeline that allows rainwater to enter. Currently used for garden tool storage by the Friends of the Manor Gardens, creating an interpretive exhibit in this building is under consideration.





## Saint James General Store, Deepwells Farm County Park, Saint James



*Friends/User(s): None*  
*Hours: Open daily; call for hours*  
*Acquired: 1990*  
*National Register: Yes, 1973*  
*SCHT Status: Dedicated, 1996 (museum/  
functional)*  
*Acreage: 13.2 (See Deepwells Farm)*

### Buildings

*Saint James General Store* (1892): Store/museum; clapboard over wood frame with brick foundation.

### History

The Saint James General Store, built by Ebenezer Smith, has been in operation since 1857 and is believed to be the oldest continually operating store in the country. Early on, it also served as a post office and housed the first public telephone in the area. It remained in Smith family ownership until the 1950s and was acquired by Suffolk County in 1990.

### Status

Operated by Suffolk County employees, the Saint James General Store is an interpreted gift shop and bookstore. Most of the store's wares are significantly different from those once sold, although there are displays that replicate the wares of the late nineteenth century.

### Condition

In good condition, the wood roof was replaced and the building repainted using original colors derived from paint analysis in 2004. A 2007 building assessment noted cracks in the foundation, rot at some window frames, and the need for a retaining wall on the property. The building's interior is in good condition: worn patinas and signs of general wear are meant to evoke a more authentic feeling.

## Scully Estate (Wereholme) Suffolk County Environmental Center, Islip



*Friends/User(s):*  
Seatuck Environmental Association  
*Hours:* Wed – Sun 10-4:30  
*Acquired:* 2004  
*National Register:* Yes, 2007  
*SCHT Status:* Dedicated, 2007 (museum,  
functional)  
*Acreage:* 69.5 (dedicated)

### Buildings

*Main House* (1917): Offices, classrooms, and residence; concrete block with slate roof

*Old Garage* (1917): Storage; concrete block with slate roof

*Greenhouse* (1917): Clapboard over wood frame

*Other landscape features:* Not inspected - birdhouse, walled garden, fountain, entrance pillars, and walls.

### History

Designed by Grosvenor Atterbury in 1917, this French eclectic style house is an early example of concrete block construction first introduced by Atterbury in Forest Hills Gardens. The estate, which consisted of only one developed acre and the rest of the property left wild, was built for Lousine Peters and her husband, Harold Weekes. It passed to their daughter Hathaway Scully who, without heirs, bequeathed the property to the National Audubon Society in 1984 for use as a wildlife sanctuary and nature center. Audubon used the facility for its Living Oceans Campaign until the County acquired it in 2004. Shortly thereafter, negotiations began with the Seatuck Environmental Association to use the property as its new home.

### Status

Unique among Historic Trust properties, the agreement between the County and Seatuck Environmental Association requires the custodian to maintain a separate account for building maintenance and operations and commit \$300,000 to capital improvements during the life of the twenty-year contract. To prepare the site for Seatuck which took occupancy in 2006, Suffolk County invested \$3 million in repairs and improvements.





Opened to the public in April 2010, Seatuck's programming includes a nature center in the main house, various exhibits, an information center, mapped trails, and environmental programs throughout the site. There are also plans for an outdoor classroom, a boardwalk, and an exhibit with published information interpreting the site's history.

#### Condition

*Main house:* The main house has recently undergone extensive rehabilitation and is in very good condition. In 2007, the slate roof and drainage system were repaired, a new HVAC system was installed, interior features were rehabilitated, and leaded glass windows were restored.

*Garage:* In good condition, most elements appear sound and wooden doors were recently replaced in kind.

*Greenhouse:* In good condition, the structure has been restored

## Suffolk Lodge Historic District, Southaven County Park (south end), Southaven



*Friends/User(s):* None  
*Hours:* Call for hours  
*Acquired:* 1967  
*National Register:* No  
*SCHT Status:* Dedicated, 1984 (functional); Southaven House listed  
*Acreage:* 1323

#### Buildings

*Suffolk Lodge* (1934): Suffolk County Police headquarters; shingle over wood frame with slate roof

*West Barn* (late 1950s): Storage; shingle over wood frame

*Carriage House* (1850): Vacant; shingle over wood frame

*Shed* (1880): Storage; shingle over wood frame

*East Barn* (late 1950s): Storage; shingle over wood frame

*Octagon pump house:* Functional; brick masonry

*Fish hatcheries 1-6;* Derelict

*Southaven House* (1850): Residence

## History

Built in 1934 for Anson Hard as a private hunting lodge, the Suffolk Lodge occupies the site of the former Suffolk Club (of which Hard was a member). Designed by architect Frederick R. King, the current lodge incorporates materials from the former club, including timbers, balustrades and a weather vane. Its landscape was designed by Charles W. Leavitt, Jr. After Hard died in the late 1950s, his son Kenneth converted the property into "The Suffolk Lodge Game Preserve," for hunting and fishing.

## Status

The building served as a County employee residence until the early 1990s when a Request for Proposals (RFPs) was issued seeking potential operators to reuse the Lodge as a bed and breakfast. The concept was abandoned when too few candidates responded and by the late 1990s, the County opted to use the building as Suffolk County Park Police Headquarters. The majority of the other buildings are either vacant or used for storage. The fish hatcheries are abandoned.

## Condition

*Suffolk Lodge:* Regularly maintained and in relative good condition, water problems affect the basement and parts of the building. A recent basement flood had not yet dried on the day of inspection and a leaky roof was observed at the rear conservatory. Mold growth is apparent around the base of the building and a slate patio has foundation cracks. Aluminum windows were recently installed and the HVAC system has been updated.

*Carriage House:* In fair condition, this building served the original Suffolk Club. The building's interior was not accessible, but the exterior shows signs of advanced wear, principally due to ground moisture. Wood wall boards and doors are worn, moldy and rotting in places. County inspection concluded a poorly supported interior loft contributes to the building's overall lean.

*Shed:* In good condition, shingles surrounding the door have been recently replaced, while others at lower parts are affected by mold.

*East Barn:* Currently used for storage, this building originally served as a stable until the 1970s. In fair condition, the roof is adequate but exterior walls are showing signs of rot and general deterioration at various locations. Windows are extremely deteriorated with several boarded up by painted plywood.

*West Barn:* In good condition. The roof is adequate and shingles and trim are maintained. All windows of this structure are boarded up.

*Octagon pump house:* Built into a berm, this structure is in good condition.

*Fish Hatches:* Not inspected. County's assessment is very poor.

*Southaven House:* Not inspected, but County's condition assessment is good.



## Theodore Roosevelt County Park, Montauk



*Friends/User(s): None*  
*Hours: None*  
*Acquired: 1971*  
*National Register: Eligible*  
*SCHT Status: Dedicated, 1991 (functional;  
Third House: functional/museum)*  
*Acreage: 1157*

### Buildings

*Third House* (1806): Park offices in west wing; shingle over wood frame

*Motel Unit* (c. 1950): Temporary housing; shingle over wood frame

*Cabin 1/bunkhouse* (1938): Storage; split logs over wood frame

*Cabins 2-9* (c. 1930): Temporary housing; split logs over wood frame

*Generator* (c. 1950): Functional

*GATR transmitter/receiver building* (c. 1950)

*Lindley House* (1940s)

### History

Third House was one of three structures erected at Montauk by European settlers between 1744 and 1747. Along with First and Second Houses, Third House was used seasonally by ranchers to graze sheep and cattle. Of the three, only Second and Third House remain. The original Third House was built in 1747 but the extant structure was constructed in 1806. The property includes several documented archeological sites associated with the Montaukett Indian tribe. In 1898, Theodore Roosevelt and the Rough Riders, returning from the Spanish-American War, were quarantined there to prevent the spread of Yellow Fever. His brief residence is the site's greatest brush with fame and gives the park its official name. Third House, sold to private owners in the early twentieth century, stood vacant for several years until it became the Deep Hollow [dude] Ranch in 1937. In 1939, wings were added to the main house to provide greater guest capacity. At this time eight guest cabins, a bunkhouse, swimming pool, and an event pavilion were also added. More alterations and additions were made to the site throughout the 1940s and 1950s. Suffolk County purchased the property in 1971 in response to the threat of a subdivision development.



### Status

Functioning as a museum into the 1990s, Third House was closed in 2000 to begin an extensive restoration project. Work at the main house



included reproduction wood windows, new footings, new rafters, chimney repair and re-pointing, new roofing, replacement of missing wall shingles, new gutters, interior and exterior painting, and new doors. While much of the work was completed in 2006, a funding shortage postponed completion of the main house interior, delayed a Certificate of Occupancy for much of the building, and greatly limited space for public use. As of 2010, the building's main entrance serves as a visitor center. Several ancillary buildings were also restored under the project's scope of work, with several cabins used for seasonal employee housing, and others remaining vacant or used as storage. The Lindley house, occupied through a life estate until 2010, is now part of the County's Housing program.



### Condition

*Third House:* In overall good condition but inconsistent. The building is secure and the recent restoration covered the first floor. Upper floor rooms need finishing.

*Motel Unit:* The structure appears to be in very good condition although interior was not accessible.

*Cabin 1/Bunkhouse:* The structure is in fair condition. While the roof appears sound, windows and doors are poor with degraded glazing compound and wood elements. Siding is weathered and host to algae.

*Cabins 2-9:* All restored in 2000, these buildings are in very good condition. While original features remain at the exteriors, interiors have been crudely updated for modern amenities.

*Generator:* Not inspected; County's assessment is fair.

*GATR transmitter/receiver building:* Not inspected; County's assessment is fair.

*Lindley House:* Not inspected; County's assessment is good.



## Timber Point County Golf Course, Great River



*Friends/User(s):* None  
*Hours:* Seasonally, by reservation  
*Acquired:* 1970  
*National Register:* No  
*SCHT Status:* Dedicated, 1987 (functional)  
*Acreage:* 231

## Buildings

*Timber Point Clubhouse* (c. 1880s with 1920s and 1950s additions):

Catering hall/clubhouse and County offices; shingle over wood frame with brick ground floor.

*Horan House* (c.1900): Vacant; shingle over wood frame

## History

The Timber Point Clubhouse was first the residence of Julian T. Davies. It was converted to a private country club in 1923 after a group of local estate owners (including Horace Havermeyer, Buell Hollister and Kingsland Macy) purchased it to ensure an exclusive use. Under the direction of architect Charles M. Hart, the conversion involved a complete stylistic change to the main house exterior. Moving from the shingle style to the colonial revival, this included the removal of dormer windows and a turret, and the addition of a double-height colonnade at the building's rear. A west end wing was added for locker rooms and offices in the 1950s and Suffolk County purchased the property in 1972. Recently, the addition of access ramps brought the building into ADA compliance. The Horan House (built for James F. Horan) was included in the County's 1972 purchase and it served as park employee housing until 1985 after which it was abandoned and left to deteriorate.



## Status

The Timber Point property is a 27-hole regulation public golf course that is an expansion of the Club's earlier 18-hole course designed by Colt & Alison. A substantial portion of the clubhouse is used for events by Lessing's, a private catering operation in contract with Suffolk County that also provides bar/restaurant service for golfers. A pro shop also occupies a portion of the building's main floor while the second floor houses offices for the catering operation, course manager, and the Suffolk County Parks Office of Historic Services. Though adequately utilized, many rooms on the second and third floors remain vacant. The Horan House is in a state of limbo: An estimated \$100,000 for roof repair was not allocated by the County to arrest its deterioration, nor has a public referendum been issued to authorize its demolition.



## Condition

*Clubhouse:* In general the building is in good condition. The south side roof was replaced in 2007, and the remaining roof was replaced in 2011. Painted surfaces are well maintained at the exterior and there are no apparent water issues at the foundation. A concrete block retaining wall reveals out of plane cracks suggesting movement, and peeling paint throughout is an eyesore. Portions of the second and third floor interior that were omitted from the most recent restorative efforts reveal areas of exposed framing but are stable.

*Horan House:* In very poor condition, this building has been collapsing for over a decade, starting with a 1996 incident report documenting the collapse of the front porch roof. Once the main roof began to fail, the interior suffered from exposure to the elements. Interior inspection was not possible due to dangerous conditions.



## Van Bourgondien County Park, Babylon



*Friends/User(s):*  
*Town of Babylon Historical Society*  
*Hours: By appointment only*  
*Acquired: 1975*  
*National Register: No*  
*SCHT Status: Dedicated, 2007 (functional/museum)*  
*Acreage: 18.5*

### Buildings

*Van Bourgondien House* (c. 1929): office (museum planned); stucco over wood frame with slate roof

### History

Originating in Holland and arriving in the United States in 1904, the Van Bourgondien family (still in operation) has been in the tulip and bulb business since the early nineteenth century. After exploring a few other locations, the family established its nursery in Babylon where its production became an integral part of the local economy and identity, to the point of inspiring an annual Tulip Festival in the 1940s and 1950s. As a nursery operation, the current property once had numerous greenhouses and an additional two cottages, however, only the house remains today and the grounds have been converted to soccer fields.

### Status

Owned by the County since the 1970s, the grounds of the Van Bourgondien property have been used as parkland for many years, but the house, only recently dedicated to the Historic Trust, has been neglected for a long time. Newspaper articles from 1980 reference plans to put the building to use, but all attempts were short lived, including a plan to provide housing for immigrant nurses in the early 2000s. The County recently completed a custodial contract with the Town of Babylon Historical Society to restore the building and operate it as a museum focused on the history of the town and the bulb growing industry. The building currently serves as offices for the historical society.

### Condition

Generally, the building is in good condition. The roof and stolen copper downspouts have been replaced and exterior cracks have been re-



paired. Casement windows are in very good condition. Interior finishes, such as rusticated exposed beams in the great hall and wall surfaces are also in good condition and there are plans to reinstall shutters currently in storage. Aluminum garage doors will be replaced with reproductions of the originals and the friends group plans to re-construct an arbor.

## West Hills County Park, Huntington



*Friends/User(s): None*  
*Hour(s): By appointment only*  
*Acquired: 1969*  
*National Register: Yes, 1973, Jacob Smith and Oakley Houses*  
*SCHT Status: Dedicated, 1984: Smith House; 1996: Oakley House; 2007 Caretaker's House (listed)*  
*Acreage: 854*

### Buildings

*Jacob Smith House (c. 1700; 1820): Vacant; shingle over wood frame*  
*Caretaker's House (c. 1910): Offices/garage; shingle over wood frame*  
*Oakley House (c. 1710): Residence; shingle over wood frame*

### History

West Hills is in the area of Walt Whitman's birthplace and is closely associated with him. The land was originally owned by Solomon Smith who sold it to Henry Stimpson. Stimpson later sold it to Henry Kaufman as a Boy Scout Camp. The site is now owned by Suffolk County, but is still in frequent use by the Boy Scouts.

### Status

The three historic buildings that make up the West Hills County Park are currently part the Suffolk County Housing Program. From 2008 – 2009, three of the buildings were vacant as a result of legislation that required market rate rents from all County-owned rental properties. These rigid requirements have been relaxed and the County is currently seeking a tenant for the Jacob Smith House.

### Condition

*Jacob Smith House (aka Solomon Smith House, Stimpson House):* Originally built around 1700, the building's porches were added in around 1820 (a date that is inscribed on a beam). In excellent condition,



the house has modern fixtures and a 2003 cedar shingle roof replacement. The floors are not completely level and plaster work is needed at the walls and ceilings.

*Caretaker's House and Garage:* Built circa 1910, this Shingle Style/ Arts and Crafts building consists of a residence with attached barn and garage and was a part of the Simpson Estate known as Highhold. In overall good condition, some damage and moss growth was apparent at ground level shingles.

*John Oakley House:* This 1710 house is actually the result of several moves and reconfigurations. Two houses were combined in the eighteenth century and evidence suggests that the house was moved some time after 1917. It was donated to Suffolk County by a nearby resident and was moved again to its current location in 1999. After the last move, the stone foundation was reconstructed with modern materials in order to accommodate the house on the sloped lot. Restored in 2000 the house is in excellent condition.



## West Sayville Golf Course, West Sayville Meadow Edge (Anson Hard Estate)



*Friends/User(s):*

*Long Island Maritime Museum,  
Developmental Disabilities Institute*

*Hours:*

*Museum: Mon – Sat 9–4, Sun 12–4*

*Offices: Monday – Friday*

*Greenhouse: Contact DDI*

*Acquired: 1974 (Meadow Edge);*

*1978 (Oyster Cull House, Penney Boat  
Shop); 1984 (Bayman's Cottage); 1988  
(golf pro shop).*

*National Register: 2001 (Oyster Cull House)*

*SCHT Status: Dedicated, 1987 (functional/  
museum)*

*Acreage: 250*

### Buildings

*Main House (1909):* County offices and catering hall; stucco over wood frame

*Servants Quarters (1912):* Offices; stucco over wood frame

*Garage (1923):* Museum; stucco over wood frame

*Boathouse (1909):* Storage; stucco over wood frame

*Greenhouse (1909):* Functional; steel frame with glass on brick foundation

*Storage Shed #1 (1909):* Woodshop; vertical wood plank over wood frame

*Storage Shed #2: (rebuilt c. 2000)* Storage; corrugated metal over wood frame

*Storage Shed #3:* Storage; corrugated metal over wood frame

*Montauk Highway Gatehouse* (1909): Residence; stucco over wood frame

*West Avenue Gatehouse* (1909): office; stucco over wood frame

*West Avenue Gatehouse Garage*: Functional; clapboard over wood frame

*Bayman's Cottage* (1870): Museum/residence; clapboard over wood frame

*Oyster Cull House* (1890): Museum; wood plank over wood frame

*Penney Boat Shop* (1890): Museum; vertical wood plank over wood frame

*Golf Pro Shop* (1988): Retail store; stucco over wood frame

## History

The history of this site tracks two stories: that of the Meadow Edge estate and the Long Island shellfish business. Meadow Edge, designed by the prominent Long Island architect Isaac Henry Greene, was a wedding gift to Anson and Florence Hard from Florence's father, Frederic Bourne. Built in 1909 (with a servants wing added to the main house in 1912), it served as the family's summer retreat and a working farm. To accommodate Mr. Hard's growing automobile collection and provide a game room, the garage, originally built to accommodate a chauffeur and two cars, was expanded three times. The estate was purchased by Suffolk County in 1966 from an elderly Mrs. Hard, who, after failing to sell the property for residential development, was encouraged to approach Suffolk County. Working at the time on expanding its park system, Suffolk County, within two years, converted the property into a golf course that remains popular today.

The property's older structures – the Bayman's Cottage, the Oyster Cull House, and the Penney Boat Shop – were moved to the site by the Long Island Maritime Museum which was established in 1966 and occupies the Meadow Edge Garage. The Cull House is a remnant of the William Rudolph Oyster Company, which operated from 1895-1947.

Home to Leonard Beebe, the Bayman's Cottage represents the typical residence of a south shore bayman's family. Largely intact, the house was donated to the museum by the Beebe family in 1983. The Penney Boatshop, acquired in 1978, was moved to the site to serve the Maritime Museum's interpretive program.

## Status

While the grounds of the former Meadow Edge site have been reworked into a County golf course, its structures function in a variety of ways to serve multiple operators. The Main House is the Suffolk County Parks Department headquarters and a catering hall. The former estate garage provides offices and the main exhibition space for the Long Island Maritime Museum which also occupies the West Avenue Gatehouse. The Boathouse is used for storage by the Maritime Museum while the Servants Quarters, adjacent to the main house, provides additional office space to the Parks Department. In exchange for supplying plants to the County, Developmental Disabilities Institute (DDI) runs the Greenhouse Recreation Opportunities Workshop (GROW) for developmentally disabled adults out of the greenhouse. This organization also uses one of the





site's three storage sheds as a woodshop. The other two sheds provide storage for the Long Island Maritime Museum. The Museum uses the National Register-listed Oyster Cull House to portray Long Island's oyster business and has restored the Bayman's Cottage to interpret its first floor to illustrate a 19th century oysterman's life while the second floor serves as an apartment for a County employee. The Penney Boat Shop is used by the Maritime Museum as a boat shop. The Montauk Highway Gate House gatehouse is currently rented through the County's Housing program and the Golf Pro Shop which is a relatively new building operates as a retail business.

### Condition

*Main House:* In overall good condition, the Main House has been restored. Interior details are well-preserved, including carved mantel-pieces, trim, balustrades and wood paneling. A new roof was installed in 1990 and a number of additions have been made to accommodate catering events.

*Servants Quarters:* In good condition, the restoration of this structure included the installation of a commercial kitchen on the lower level and offices on the second story.

*Garage:* In relatively good condition, although some signs of deterioration are apparent including paint loss and water damage at interior ceilings (possibly connected to HVAC systems) and at gutters.

*Boathouse:* With windows boarded, this small structure is original to the estate and is in fair condition.

*Greenhouse:* In fair condition, this metal frame structure is deteriorating. The venting system no longer operates and there is noticeable rot and rust in wood and metal elements. There is also persistent water leakage in the cellar. Funds have been appropriated and a state grant is in process for restoration.

*Storage Shed #1:* Renovated for use as a woodshop, the building has upgraded plumbing and electrical systems, as well as new doors. A new roof is needed as is a new paint job.

*Storage Shed #2:* In good to fair condition with water damage.

*Storage Shed #3:* In fair condition, though stabilized and set on a temporary foundation.

*Montauk Highway Gatehouse:* In excellent condition, this building received several major repairs in recent years. Interior was not accessible for inspection

*West Avenue Gatehouse:* In very good condition. Interior was not accessed.

*West Avenue Gatehouse Garage:* Also is in very good condition.

*Bayman's Cottage:* Restored in the early 1980s, the building is in good condition, but would benefit from fresh paint.

*Oyster Cull House:* Restored in 1974, the building is in general good condition, although paint loss apparent

*Penney Boat Shop:* In good condition generally with some foundation-level clapboard showing signs of deterioration.

*Golf Pro Shop:* A little over thirty years old, the building remains in good condition.



## Yaphank Historic District Southaven County Park (north end), Yaphank



*Friends/User(s):*

*Yaphank Historical Society*

*Suffolk County Police Historic Society*

*Hours: Hawkins House only: Sun, 1-4 pm.*

*Acquired: 1967; 1974; 1998 (Mary Booth House)*

*National Register: 1988: Homan House;*

*1986: Hawkins House; others are not*

*SCHT Status: Dedicated, 1984 (museum);*

*(Yaphank garage: 1991, Mary Booth*

*House: 1996); Grey Cottage listed 2007*

*(functional). Octagon foundation pending review.*

*Acreage: 1356 (see Suffolk Lodge)*

### Buildings

*Homan-Gerard House (1790): Vacant; shingle over heavy timber frame*

*Homan tool house (1820) + three accessory structures now collapsed*

*Mary Booth House (1820): House museum; shingle over wood frame*

*Hawkins House (1851): House museum; shingle over wood frame with brick foundation*

*The Yaphank Garage (1937): Museum; concrete masonry units*

*The Grey Cottage (c. 1950): Residence; clapboard over wood frame*

### History

The Yaphank Historic District includes structures that date from 1790 to the first half of the twentieth century. The oldest structure, the Homan House was part of a mill complex that operated until around 1900. Built for John Homan, it was one of the first structures at the crossroads that would later become Yaphank. With a porch and one story added circa 1840 and a veranda and lean-to added around 1900, the building was deemed uninhabitable in the 1950s. In 1966, the Homan property (which included the extant 1820 tool shed and three other outbuildings now lost) was purchased by Suffolk County for parkland. The project was abandoned and the house was transferred to the Office of Historic Services.

The Mary Booth House is the birthplace of Mary Louise Booth, a prominent translator, writer, abolitionist, suffragist and most notably, the first editor of Harper's Bazaar. The building was donated to Suffolk County in 1998 and moved to its present location.

The only Italianate style house in Yaphank, the Hawkins House was built in 1851 for New York City businessman, Robert Hewlett Hawkins based on plans likely drawn from a pattern book and using wood from the Homan Mill across the street. Following a number of owners after





Hawkins' widow sold it in 1887, the building last served as a boarding house in the mid-20th century. It was purchased in 1966 and transferred to Suffolk County Parks in 1974. Extremely deteriorated at the time, the building was restored over several years by the Yaphank Historical Society working with the County and opened to the public in 1986.

Recently restored, the Yaphank Garage of 1937 was a working auto service station. It is now operated by the Suffolk County Police Historical Society as a police museum.

The William J. Weeks House was a two-story octagonal house, built in 1848. The house burned in 1959 and all that remains is its foundation.

### Status

At the edge of Southaven County Park, the Yaphank Historic District maintains an in-town feeling that is distinct among Historic Trust properties. The district resulted from an abandoned road-widening project and currently comprises the Hawkins, Homan, and Garage properties as well as one relocated building and the foundation of an octagon building. The district is supported by the Yaphank Historical Society which occupies and programs the Hawkins House as a museum, and works to restore other properties at the site for future interpretation. Its current focus is the Mary Booth House which will be interpreted as a house museum with an exhibition space. Additionally, the Yaphank Garage is maintained and programmed as a museum by the Suffolk County Police Historical Society. Other structures are vacant and in fair to poor condition. Several outbuildings have collapsed including three that were associated with the National Register-listed Homan-Gerard House.

### Condition

*Homan-Gerard House* (aka Homan-Hard House): The building has been neglected for years and is extremely deteriorated. The rear lean-to and chimney have collapsed and insect damage and rot have compromised structural stability. The flooring system is failing, and there is documentation that the foundation is shifting. A new roof, installed in 1993, has helped to delay the loss of this building, but temporary repairs and stabilization efforts will not protect the building indefinitely.

*Mary Booth House*: In the process of restoration. A new foundation was constructed in the late 1990s and the chimney and fireplaces were replaced in 2004. The County has installed a new fire safety and electric system and the historical society is currently working on the interior.

*Hawkins House*: Restoration of this building began in 1976 and included a new roof, foundation re-pointing, window sash and door repair, exterior painting, interior re-plastering and general finish work. The house has been repainted in 1994 and 2003 and the roof was partially replaced in 1993.

*The Yaphank Garage*: In excellent condition as a result of recent restoration by the Suffolk County Police Historical Society.

*The Grey Cottage*: This building appears to be in very good condition. Inspection of the interior was not possible.

