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Marlborough Street, Newport, RI: A Cultural Landscape Analysis

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Historic Preservation

School of Architecture, Art and Historic Preservation
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Summer 2019

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Abstract

Marlborough Street in the downtown district of Newport, Rhode Island is a historically and culturally rich area of the city. It is home to several noteworthy historic structures, some of which date back to the seventeenth century. Despite its unique character, its history has remained obscure. This report aims to answer why the history of Marlborough Street is not as recognized as it should be. Its goal is to provide readers with a detailed history of its existence from the seventeenth century to present day. It will then conduct a cultural landscape analysis by examining the existing conditions of the street in terms of its physicality and character. It will then provide a series of recommendations with the goal of influencing future restoration and rehabilitation projects, making the street a more desirable place to live, and allowing it to become a vibrant part of Newport's downtown.

Introduction

The City of Newport, Rhode Island holds over three hundred years' worth of history, dating back to 1639. The city officially laid out its first streets in 1654, beginning with Thames Street and Marlborough Street.¹ While Thames Street is most commonly associated with the City of Newport due to its busy activity and well-recognized historic character, Marlborough Street has not earned the same reputation, despite its rich historical background. The street today primarily serves as a connector between Thames and Broadway, another active street in the city. Marlborough itself is mainly made up of mixed residential and commercial buildings, varying in architectural styles. Most importantly, it contains some of Newport's oldest historic resources.² Among its notable resources are: The White Horse Tavern (circa 1673), the historic Jailhouse, which is now the Jailhouse Inn (circa 1772), the John Coddington House (circa 1725), and St. Paul's Methodist Church (1806). Also viewable from Marlborough's streetscape is the Great Friends Meeting House, which sits on the corner of Farewell Street and is the oldest surviving building in Newport, dating to 1699. These resources alone tell the rich history of the street and indicate that it was a lively place of commercial activity as early as the seventeenth century.

Marlborough Street was a major contributor to the landscape of Newport in its earliest years of establishment due to Marlborough Dock that was constructed sometime before 1712 and brought in a great deal of commercial activity, such as the trading of goods with other regions. This led to more prosperity of individuals at the time, mainly those who were involved in the trade industry. This allowed for the rapid growth of architecture on the street, which was vastly

¹ "A Brief History of Newport," *Newport Historical Society: History Starts Here*, 2018, <http://newporthistory.org/about/brief-history-of-newport/>.

² Florence Parker Simister, *Streets of the City: An Anecdotal History of Newport* (Providence: The Mowbray Company-Publishers, 1969), 35.

underdeveloped before this time.³ As the city experienced a number of phases of both growth and decline between the eighteenth century and the present, the street struggled economically in response, but was revived again during the periods when the economy was flourishing.⁴ A great deal of its historic fabric was removed from the street during one of its major periods of decline, between the 1950s and 70s. Newport experienced an age of disinvestment due to economic downturn, leading to widespread disinvestment of historic structures.⁵ Today, the street is at one of its lower points, economically speaking. Many driving factors tie into this, such as its proximity to Thames Street, which is undeniably the most active part of the city today, its poor preservation tactics, and its lack of thriving businesses. The long period of change has eliminated much of the historic character it once had. The lack of businesses on the street tend to push tourists away and direct them towards the liveliness of Thames Street and Broadway. As one moves towards the west of Marlborough Street, there suddenly becomes an eruption of modern architecture and franchises, almost stripping the street of its historic character that is already lacking. However, the surviving historic resources have the capability of bringing recognition and vibrancy back to the street.

This study aims to perform an analysis Marlborough Street through in-depth historical research and cultural landscape analysis to discover how it has evolved throughout time into a less-recognized area of the city. It also conducts an opportunities analysis which proposes ideas for its future recognition as a significant contributor the Newport's overall landscape. The main questions this research aims to answer are: what stories can Marlborough Street tell and how can

³ Ibid.

⁴ Sara Butler, "Introducing Newport", Lecture, "Newport Seminar", Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI, August 31, 2016.

⁵ "The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report."

preservationists, city planners, and historians reactivate the street in the future to tell these stories? Examination of historical evidence, existing conditions, and cultural landscape analysis is used to answer these questions. The research found through have assisted in constructing the reactivation suggestions in the end of the report. This research supports greater recognition of Marlborough Street and can serve as a basis for future planning efforts for public investment and preservation activities that would enhance the historic street such as improvement projects, building rehabilitation projects, and small business improvements.

The research relied on three key methods to answer the questions in this research project. The first is the use of archival research, which was used to chronicle the history of Marlborough Street, mainly using city directories, newspaper clippings, maps, and repositories. Previous planning and preservation efforts focused on Marlborough Street were also studied. The second method is documentation which was used to analyze the street in its current existing condition. Here, photographs and notes were taken of each building and of the vacant landscapes that exist. This assisted in telling how the street has evolved in comparison to what was determined in the historical maps that were consulted. The third methods used was a cultural landscape analysis, which also assisted in examining the existing conditions of the street. Rather than just examining the physical conditions of a given place, a cultural landscape study looks at social meaning, indicating how specific groups of people have impacted the space in which they live in.⁶ Here, the physical conditions of the street today will be examined through the lens of the people who have built up the landscape over time. All research compiled through these methods then assists in determining suggestions for the reactivation of Marlborough as a future contributor to the city of Newport.

⁶ Elaine Stiles, “Cultural Landscape Foundation”, Lecture “American Cultural Landscapes”, Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI, January 25th, 2018.

The City of Newport has deemed certain sections of Marlborough Street as part of the Newport Historic District. Because only certain sections of the street have been protected through their location in the historic district, less preservation efforts have been made in the other portions of the street, such as areas that have been demolished for parking lots. It is hopeful that in the future, the entirety of Marlborough Street may be part of the city's historic district with the help of the suggestions made in the reactivation chapter.

The discovered answers through research plans to bring more awareness to the Newport community regarding the importance of the street and why it should be revived as an active part of the city, in the future. It is apparent that there has been a lack of prior study and literature written on this notable section of Newport, therefore this study seeks to fill that gap. The contribution from this research also plans to influence researchers to conduct further studies on areas of Newport or other cities, that deserve more recognition than they currently receive.

Chapter one of this report focuses on analyzing the history and development of Marlborough Street from as early as the seventeenth century, leading up to present day. Following this information, chapter two moves on to provide a detail description of the streets' existing conditions and evident layers that have developed from the seventeenth century up until the present. Lastly, chapter 3 analyzes a series of reactivation recommendations that aim to better Marlborough Street for the future.

Chapter 1: The History and Development of Marlborough Street

Introduction

This chapter provides the historical background of Marlborough Street starting from the seventeenth century. It is divided into sections per periods of the upturn and decline in Newport's economy based on information found in historical maps, the city's archives, and other archival and secondary sources. This chapter also aims to give a detailed description of how Marlborough Street evolved as a basis for analysis.

A Brief Introduction to the History of the City of Newport

Throughout history, Newport has experienced several periods of growth and decline in its economy. When the city was first founded in 1639, it was made up of a range of settlers with different religious views. Many of these settlers were Jewish and Quaker who were escaping religious persecution in New England towns they had previously settled in. They took advantage of the land by growing crops and trading with other colonies and later, countries. Most importantly during this period, some of today's most notable architecture was constructed, including the White Horse Tavern, which served as a major social meeting space on Marlborough Street.⁷ By 1720, Newport had reached its first Golden Age, which lasted until 1776. Craftsmen and merchants began producing goods such as fine furniture pieces, rum, candles, and more causing the city's economy to flourish. Many families also began to take in slaves from Africa during this time, causing a growth in population. The city is known as a "wealth center" and is known for the triangular trade, trading its goods with Africa and South America. By the end of this period, around the 1960s, the city experienced a major growth in

⁷ "A Brief History of Newport," *Newport Historical Society: History Starts Here*, 2018.

new architecture that have become city landmarks. Examples of these surviving structures are Redwood Library and Trinity Church.⁸

In 1775, the American Revolution began, which would hugely impact the physical appearance of Marlborough Street along with much of city. During this time, the population in Newport plummeted from about 12,000 citizens to 4,000 due to the takeover of the city by British soldiers. Many citizens were forced to flee and settle elsewhere. During the time of their occupation, the economy fell into severe disrepair. By 1800, Newport had much of its city to rebuild due to the loss it endured over the past years. This period of decline lasted until around the 1830s, when the city began to completely reinvent itself.⁹ The city finally reached its second Golden age in the 1830s. By this time, wealthy Southerners and new Yorkers had become infatuated with Newport's landscape and saw it as an ideal location to build their summer homes. This led Newport to become known as a summer resort town. The mansions that were built by these wealthy families have made the city the popular tourist destination that it is today. Newport remained a vacation city for the wealthy until 1929, when the stock market crashed, forcing several of these elite families to be forced to sell their homes and leave Newport for the summers.¹⁰ This depression in the city lasted for several decades, up until about 1973. During this time, many of the city's historic resources were neglected due to the lack of money to keep them properly maintained. Many of its buildings were also demolished due to neglect or to make room for new homes and commercial spaces. By 1973, the city reinvented itself into the bustling tourist destination it had once been. Many of the historic buildings were restored, including the infamous mansions on Bellevue Avenue.¹¹ Since this time, the city has continued to flourish and

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

advance. It is still a popular summer destination, but has a year-round population of about 25,000 citizens (2016).¹² It is important to note these specific notes when taking a closer look at Marlborough Street and how it has evolved over time. There is clear evidence to show how the Street has been negatively affected by these times of decline, and how it has bounced back during years of economic growth.

Introducing Marlborough Street

Named after the famous John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough,¹³ Marlborough Street is in the downtown area of Newport, branching off Broadway Street, in what is known as the seaport district of the city.¹⁴ Broadway Street connects down to Thames Streets which intersects between Marlborough and West Marlborough Streets. West Marlborough Street connects to America's Cup Avenue, where the waterfront is visible (Figure 1).

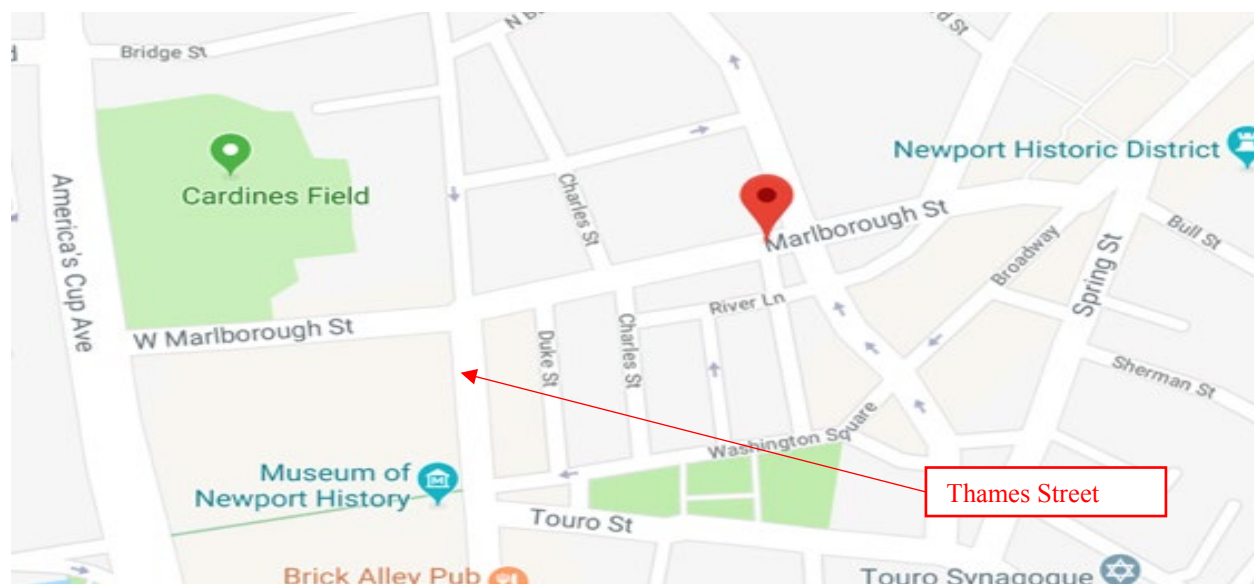


Figure 1: Map showing location of Marlborough Street in Newport, RI. Courtesy of Google.

¹² "Population," *City of Newport, RI*, 2018, <http://www.cityofnewport.com/departments/planning-development/community-profile/population>.

¹³ Florence Parker Simister, *Streets of the City: An Anecdotal History of Newport* (Providence: The Mowbray Company-Publishers, 1969), 35.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

The street was among the first of the two streets to be officially established in the city, along with Thames Street, one of the most well-known streets in the downtown. Marlborough and Thames Streets were both established circa 1654.¹⁵ Like most downtown streets in the city, Marlborough Street is generally made up of commercial and mixed-use buildings. Its history tells that the street functioned in a similar way, beginning in the eighteenth century. In the mid-seventeenth century, the Quakers played a major role in the settlement of Marlborough Street. This is evident through one of the streets; most notable historic structures being: The Great Friends Meeting House (Figure 2). By 1700, half of Newport's population were members of the Society of Friends, the religious group established by the Quakers.¹⁶ They built their gathering space on the corner of Farewell and Marlborough Streets. Its existence is visible in the Mumford map of 1712, along with another early structure, being the town Jailhouse.



Figure 2: John Collins, *Lithograph of Historic Quaker Meeting*. Circa 1800s. Courtesy of the Newport Historical Society.

¹⁵ "A Brief History of Newport," *Newport Historical Society: History Starts Here*, 2018, <http://newporthistory.org/about/brief-history-of-newport/>.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Period 1: The Founding (1639-1720s)

Although there is no known map of Newport from this period, Marlborough Street's history dates to as early as the mid 1600s.¹⁷ During the earliest period of settlement in Newport, the economy relied heavily on agriculture and trade.¹⁸

After its official establishment in 1654, the street contained few houses and was mostly still made up of open, agricultural land and small shops.¹⁹ According to the statewide report written on the West Broadway Neighborhood, (which includes Broadway Street, Marlborough Street, Washington Square, parts of Northern Thames Street, and smaller connecting streets in the city) the areas was widely filled with small business shops and operations such as: tanneries, sawmills, cooperages, bakeries, blacksmiths, masons, and more.²⁰ Interestingly, a man by the name of William Codington, who was a co-leader of the early English settlers to the city, built his home on Marlborough Street. The fact that an individual of such importance at the time decide to settle directly on the street, entails that it was a much desirable area to live in, which was of course only considered to be a town at this time in history due to its small scale. Homeowners grew crops on farm spaces in their yards which they would use to feed their families or trade, depending on how much was being produced. In her book *Streets of the City: An Anecdotal History of Newport*, Florence Parker Simister mentions: "originally, we are told, the river ran to Marlborough Street and into the cove and Marlborough Dock was the first dock of the town."²¹ The river is no longer in existence but entails that it was used for commercial

¹⁷ The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report," *The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission*, March 1977, http://www.preservation.ri.gov/pdfs_zips_downloads/survey_pdfs/newport_wbway.pdf.

¹⁸ Sara Butler, "Introducing Newport", Lecture, "Newport Seminar", Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI, August 31, 2016.

¹⁹ "The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report," 5.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Florence Parker Simister, *Streets of the City: An Anecdotal History of Newport*, 35.

activity at the time.²²The Marlborough Dock was first constructed in 1639, where the street ends and meets the harbor. This allowed Marlborough Street to become an early center of commerce for the city.²³ It is also known that the community during this time was highly religious during this time²⁴, with individuals migrating to the city to escape persecution. As mentioned previously, these first religious groups were Jews and Quakers. The construction of the Great Friends Meeting House on the corner of Farewell and Marlborough Streets played a major role in religious activity at the time. Its estimated construction date is 1699. Since that time, it was altered several times, expanding in size due to the growing population of Quakers throughout the eighteenth century. The growth of this community entails that the Quakers had major influence on the landscape at this time, constructing simple architecture and leading a very simple life.²⁵ It is noted by the Newport Historical Society that Quakers “dominated the political, social, and economic life of the town into the 18th century.”²⁶ Next, according to author Florence Parker Simister, Marlborough was one of the first streets that constructed a great deal of architecture, primarily simple residential homes and small scale commercial spaces.²⁷ In the West Broadway Neighborhood Report written by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission in 1977, it is stated that after forty years of settlement in the city, there were a total of four hundred structures built, with many of them being within the West Broadway Neighborhood.²⁸ Of these are some of the street’s most notable buildings today. There was also a water mill known to have existed on Marlborough Street, which was apparently constructed sometime before 1641.²⁹ It

²² Ibid.

²³The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report,” 5.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵“Great Friends Meeting House”, *The Newport Historical Society: History Starts Here*, 2018.
<http://newporthistory.org/properties/great-friends-meeting-house/>.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report,” 5.

²⁹ Ibid.

was later demolished but can provide evidence that the streets purpose at the time was primarily for commercial operations

The earliest dated structure on the street is the White Horse Tavern (Figure 3). Evidence indicates construction dated earlier than 1673.³⁰ The structure was originally built by Jonathan Nichols of Newport, after he purchased the land from the governor at the time, Governor William Coddington, whose estate extended from North Baptist Street to the corner of Marlborough. With owner William Mayes Sr. being granted a license as early as 1673, the tavern was an “active center for civic affairs”, holding meetings for the town council and general assembly through the later portion of the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth century.³¹ It certainly altered the landscape of the street at the time, also drawing in tradesmen, sailors, and even pirates. It is unclear as to whether the Quakers in the community took part in drinking activities here, with the tavern neighboring the Friends Meeting House.³² This evidence shows that Marlborough was a center of activity and gathering during its earliest years.

³⁰ Florence Parker Simister, *Streets of the City: An Anecdotal History of Newport*, 35.

³¹ The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report,” 5.

³² “History - The White Horse Tavern”, *The White Horse Tavern*, 2018,
<http://whitehorsenewport.com/about/history/>.



Figure 3: Photograph of the White Horse Tavern on the corner of Farewell and Marlborough Street, Newport. Courtesy of The Newport Historical Society

Little can be told about Marlborough Street prior to the eighteenth century due to the lack of surviving resources. The earliest discovered map depicting Marlborough Street was created in 1712 and gives a bit of insight on how the street was operating at the time. A major aspect to point out is the appearance of the Marlborough Dock being documented on this map. This entails that trade was occurring in this area of the city (Figure 4). It is unclear how the physical landscape exactly appeared during early eighteenth century, because the map does not depict specific lots.³³

³³ John Mumford, "The Mumford Map of 1712", *Newportal*, Web. 12 Feb. 2019 <http://newportalri.org/items/show/13658>.



Figure 4: Detail, 1712 Map of Marlborough Street, Newport. Created by Charles Mumford. Courtesy of Newport City Hall.

Period 2: Golden Age I (1720-1776)

By this period, the town continued to expand, both in population and in wealth.³⁴ It was recorded that nearly one thousand structures were built by the year 1759.³⁵ Specifically, there was “intense development along Marlborough and Broadway Streets”.³⁶ The underlying factor for this was The Triangular Trade. During this, slaves and manufactured goods were traded between Western Europe, Africa, and South America to connect the three economies together.³⁷ Newport was trading goods with both South America and Africa, and receiving other goods in return as well as slaves.³⁸ The city was bustling during the eighteenth century, with ships coming into port here to trade goods and bring their crews in and out of the city.³⁹ While society was still heavily focused on religion (mainly Quaker), trade goods such as fish, rum, furniture, and candles was what caused the economy to truly boom.⁴⁰ The increased growth on the street

³⁴ The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report,” 7.

³⁵ The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report,” 11.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ “Transatlantic Slave Trade,” *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations: Social and Human Sciences*, accessed 12 April 2019, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/social-and-human-sciences/themes/slave-route/transatlantic-slave-trade/>.

³⁸ Sara Butler, “Introducing Newport”, Lecture, “Newport Seminar”, Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI, August 31, 2016.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ “A Brief History of Newport,” *Newport Historical Society: History Starts Here*, accessed 2018, <http://newporthistory.org/about/brief-history-of-newport/>.

indicates that more wealth was spreading to Marlborough Street due to the Marlborough Dock and rapid increase of architecture.⁴¹ It is evident that this period brought a new type of architecture to Newport. An example of this style of home is seen on Marlborough Street and is likely one of the first to be constructed there. This is the John Coddington House (Figure 5). It was originally constructed around 1730 and has undergone several alterations since that time. It is not entirely clear how the house first appeared in 1730 but was likely much smaller with a central chimney.⁴² Later photographic evidence shows several other homes on the street appeared to be similar in style to the John Coddington house.



Figure 5: Photograph of the John Coddington House post restoration in the early 1970s. Courtesy of The Newport Historical Society.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² “Historic Houses-John Coddington House”, *The Newport Restoration Foundation*, 2009-2018, https://www.newportrestoration.org/preservation/historic_houses/details/3-john_coddington.

Another major historic building that was constructed by during this period was the Newport Jailhouse, built in 1772 by George Lawton and Oliver Warner.⁴³ There was an earlier Jailhouse in the exact same location that was demolished for this new structure. Per the its website, it mainly served as “a temporary holding facility for prisoners passing through the criminal justice system.”⁴⁴ It is assumed that the incorporation of this new Jailhouse structure greatly changed the landscape of Marlborough Street once again. In the matter of a century, the street saw the construction of three entirely different types of public buildings being: which introduced a new way for citizens and visitors to spend their free time, and then the Jailhouse which held those who broke laws within the town. This period clearly saw a great deal of various types of activity occurring on the street. The increase in trade during this time must have also increased the amount of foot traffic on the street.

Period 3: Decline I (1770s - 1830s)

During the first four years of this period, the British settled in Newport while the Revolution was going on, forcing out about half of the citizens and greatly damaging the landscape.⁴⁵ Many of the homes on the street during this time were likely converted into boarding houses for these men, according the Rhode Island Historical Commission. The John Coddington House was one of them. The house was greatly enlarged and looked nothing like it would have in early eighteenth century. While the economy was still heavily reliant on trade of fish, rum, and other small goods, Newport suffered greatly from the occupation of the British and had difficulties driving them out of the city after the war.⁴⁶ According to the report written on the

⁴³ “Our Story”, *The Jailhouse Inn*, 2018, <http://jailhouse.com/content/our-story-0>.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ “A Brief History of Newport,” *Newport Historical Society: History Starts Here*, 2018, <http://newporthistory.org/about/brief-history-of-newport/>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

West Broadway Neighborhood: “in the two decades preceding the Revolution, Newport had been at the height of its commercial and seafaring prosperity; following occupation by the British and Hessian troops in 1776, all development ceased throughout the town.”⁴⁷

By the late eighteenth century, buildings, wharfs, and labeled streets are clearly depicted on Marlborough Street through the maps that were created. At this time, the Marlborough Dock is still visible where the street meets the harbor. The British army used it during this time to bring in goods and export goods that were being produced in the city. However, it is unlikely that the city was exporting a great deal of products because the British had driven out a large percentage of the city’s population. It is also important to mention how built up Newport was by this time. There is evidence of several house plots, although not many on Marlborough Street itself. One side of the street was far more developed than the other, mainly containing homes likely with large, open yards and farms (Figure 6).⁴⁸ Although there was a major increase in development since the early eighteenth century, many of the buildings from this time were lost to the invasion of the British Army. Much of the city had to be rebuilt after they left Newport. This development began around the turn of the nineteenth century. In 1790, the recorded population of the city was 6,716.⁴⁹ The statewide report states that “after the revolution, Rhode Island’s economic center shifted to Providence which had suffered relatively little during the war, and Newport never re-gained its former commercial prosperity.”⁵⁰

⁴⁷ The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report,” 12.

⁴⁸ Charles Blaskowitz, “1777 Plan of the Town of Newport”, *The Newport Map Project*, Web. 5 Oct. 2017, <http://newportmapproject.weebly.com/1777---plan-of-newport.html>.

⁴⁹ “Rhode Island Population by City, Town, and County: 1790-2010,” *RI.Gov*, 2010, http://www.planning.ri.gov/documents/census/popcounts_est/pop_cities_towns_historic_1790-2010.pdf.

⁵⁰ The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report,” 12.



Figure 6: Detail from the 1777 Map of Marlborough Street, Newport. Created by Charles Blaskowitz. Courtesy of the City of Newport.

Once the British were successfully driven out of the City, the citizens of Newport were forced to recover from the damage that had been done. In result, much of the architecture had to be rebuilt or renovated. According to the Newport Historical Society, “the landscape became frozen in time”, after the war, also “bypassing the age of industrialization” which is likely why there are few industrial buildings seen in the city today.⁵¹ According to the statewide report on the neighborhood “land in the neighborhood was used for farming, slaughter houses, small industries, and housing.”⁵² One of these few industrial buildings was constructed on West Marlborough Street, originally being the Newport Manufacturing Company, and later becoming the home of The Newport Waterworks, built sometime in the early to mid - nineteenth century (Figure 7). It was constructed directly between the Fire Department and where West Marlborough meets Marlborough Street. Around the time of construction of this industrial building brought a larger working-class population to Marlborough Street and generally restored

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report,” 17.

the city. Not long after, the landscape of the city changed, yet again. However, its economic change did not make a major impact on Marlborough Street itself, other than the opening of more small businesses. By 1830, the population in the city grew to 8, 010. The statewide report states that “after the revolution, Rhode Island’s economic center shifted to Providence which had suffered relatively little during the war, and Newport never re-gained its former commercial prosperity.”⁵³



Figure 7: Photograph of the Newport Waterworks Building, formerly known as the Newport Manufacturing Company constructed mid-19th century. Courtesy of The Newport Historical Society.

⁵³ Ibid, 7.



Figure 8: Photograph of Workers at the Newport Waterworks Group. Courtesy of The Newport Historical Society.

Period 4: Golden Age II (1830s-1929)

By 1850, the real estate atlas listed names of lot owners. According to the Newport directories, many of these individuals were primarily small business owners. It is also important to note that the Marlborough Dock is no longer visible at this point in history, meaning it likely was removed during the revitalization of the city after the British Army had left from their invasion. There is no evidence to show why it was removed from the waterfront. Also, by this time technology had advanced greatly, allowing the city to produce more of their own goods or trade goods with close by towns or cities. Due to the growing population of the city during the eighteenth century, more streets were added as well, infilling land to create more space. Pertaining to Marlborough Street specifically, much of its land had been built on by this time.

Lots were much smaller and more compact. However, the individual lots appeared to have large yard spaces and smaller home sizes. The jail, St. Paul’s Methodist Church, and Great Friends Meeting House are all clearly depicted by this time (Figure 9).⁵⁴ Since 1830 the city had seen another jump in its population. It grew from a population of 8,010 to a population of 9,563 in the year 1850.⁵⁵



Figure 9: 1850 Map of Marlborough Street, Newport. Courtesy of Newport City Hall.

Twenty years later, an updated map of the city was created by Matthew Dripps. By this time, maps were depicted in color in order to be more legible. However, the owners of lots are not depicted on this map, making it difficult to know who owned property on the street during this time. The only two labeled properties on the map are again the Great Friends Meeting House and The Jail. In terms of development by this time, the street appears roughly similar to how it did twenty years prior, in 1850. The only notable change is that some of the lots appear to have

⁵⁴ “1850 – Map of the City of Newport”, *Newport City Hall*.

⁵⁵ “Rhode Island Population by City, Town, and County: 1790-2010.”

been divided up again into smaller parcels, indicating that the city was still experiencing a great deal of growth during this time (Figure 10).⁵⁶



Figure 10: 1870 Map of Marlborough Street, Newport. Created by Matthew Dripps. Courtesy of Newport City Hall.

The redevelopment of Newport post-Civil War was an overall success due to the number of repairs made to the physical landscape. Its revitalization brought Newport's strongest period of economic rise. By this time, the city had attracted many wealthy Southern elites who bought property and built elaborate summer mansions.⁵⁷ Those who did not buy property, stayed in lavish hotels during the summer that were popping up around the city as early as the 1820s.⁵⁸ Businesses were also booming in Newport, particularly catering to the needs of the new crowds of wealthy individuals. It is evident that there was also a major "construction boom" during this period, which created many jobs for working class citizens and brought the economy back to

⁵⁶ G.M. Hopkins, "1870 – City Atlas of Newport", *Newport City Hall*.

⁵⁷ Sara Butler, "Introducing Newport", Lecture, "Newport Seminar", Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI, August 31, 2016.

⁵⁸ The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report," 17.

life.⁵⁹ Per the statewide report: “the population of Newport jumped from 8,010 in 1840 to 14,028 in 1875, and the city’s new working class need places to live as their numbers increased.”⁶⁰

By 1876, the city saw another huge growth in its population. It jumped from just 9,563 citizens in 1850 to 15,693 citizens in 1880.⁶¹ The West Broadway Neighborhood, including Marlborough Street, became the home for the growing number of working-class citizens.⁶² Much of the country experienced a major shift in production and economy during this time due to the influx of immigrants who came seeking a new life and jobs to support their families. This led to a great deal of demolition in the neighborhood and an introduction to a new masonry building type that was introduced by the age of industrialization. During this time, the West Broadway Neighborhood was widely recognized in the city as “New Town” because it was the area which became home to the “growing segment of the community,” being the working class.⁶³ The area saw another rise in construction between 1850 and 1870 consisting of boarding houses, tenement housing, and small cottages.⁶⁴ The West Broadway Neighborhood Report describes what most these new structures looked like, saying “the typical one and two family houses built in New-Town were simple rectangle structures, usually one-and-a-half or two-and –a-half stories in height, gable or mansard roofed and un-adorned... clapboarding and shingling were the predominant siding materials, and front porches with modest bracketing were common”⁶⁵ Many of these structures were later turned into multi-use buildings, adding a commercial use to the first floors. Per the report “blacksmith and wheelwrights set up shops along West Broadway and Edward and Marlborough streets, and, in 1875, Thomas S. Burdick opened a carriage factory in

⁵⁹ Ibid, 17

⁶⁰ Ibid, 18.

⁶¹ “Rhode Island Population by City, Town, and County: 1790-2010.”

⁶² Ibid, 18.

⁶³ Ibid, 19.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 20.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 20.

the three-story brick block on the southeast corner of Farewell and Marlborough Streets.”⁶⁶

During the same period, the city was also introduced to a variety of new shops, as well. These mainly catered to wealthy summer residents. However, the shops located in the West Broadway Neighborhood were opened to suit the needs of the large majority who were not wealthy, and were mostly working class. The neighborhood primarily consisted of small shops out of resident homes, carpentry and carriage repair shops, dressmaking, and coopering.⁶⁷ Surviving photographs and advertisements from city directories prove the existence of these types of businesses on Marlborough Street during the later portion of the nineteenth century (Figure 12). Up until the end of the nineteenth century, the city was still rapidly growing. Plots of land became smaller and smaller as the city began to grow larger. The flourishing of the Street did not come to a complete end by the turn of the twentieth century, but rather appeared to maintain its visibility as an active part of the city (Figure 11).

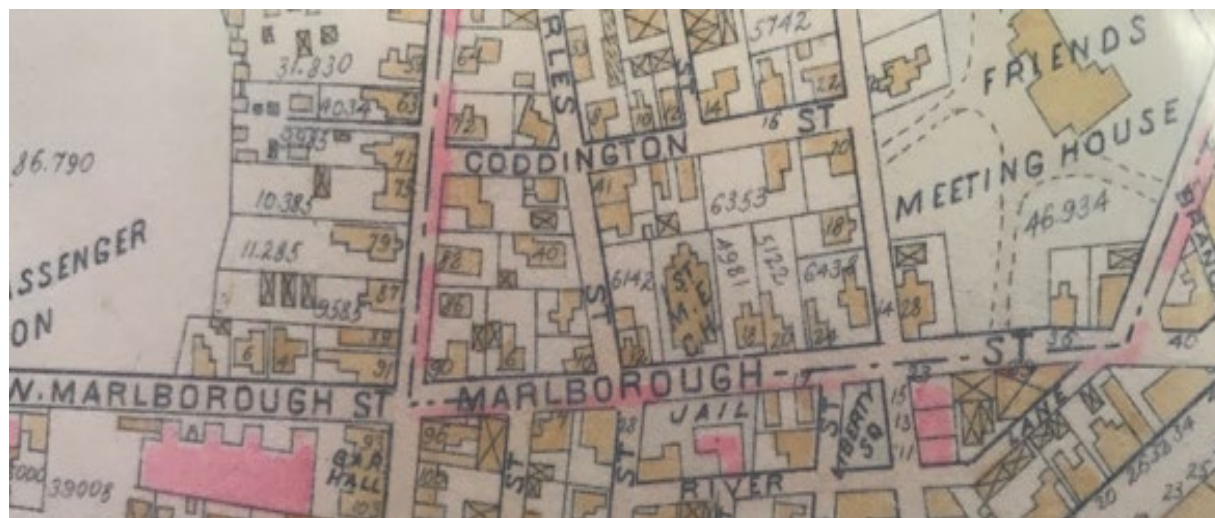


Figure 11: 1895 Map of Marlborough Street, Newport. Created by L.J. Richards. Courtesy of Newport City Hall.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 22.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 23.



Figure 12: Early 20th century advertisement found in The Newport Directory of 1920 by Sampson & Murdock Company, Courtesy of the Redwood Library.

It can be argued that during this period, the construction of mixed-use housing types destroyed much of the history that once existed on the street. While this may be true in some cases, photographic evidence tells that a great deal of repairs was made to the dilapidated buildings that were left neglected during the previous period of decline. One of these buildings was the John Coddington House (Figure 13). It appears nothing like it had when it was originally constructed, but instead, elevated off the ground to make room for a market on the first floor, called “Marlborough Market.” Other photographs from the period show the rise of new commercial spaces located on the street, that were built primarily just for business use. An example of a new building on the street at the time was called “Edward C. Walsh Furniture” (Figure 14).



Figure 13: Photograph of the John Coddington House converted into a multi-use building in the late 19th - early 20th centuries. Courtesy of The Newport Historical Society.



Figure 14: Photograph of “Edward C. Walsh Furniture” on Marlborough Street. Courtesy of The Newport Historical Society.



Figure 15: Photograph of 34 Marlborough Street- a mixed-use structure circa. 1900. Another storefront is depicted in the right corner of the photo. Courtesy of The Newport Historical Society.



Figure 16: View of Marlborough Street from Broadway Street - early 20th century. Courtesy of The Newport Historical Society.



Figure 17: Mixed-use buildings on Marlborough Street - early 20th century. Courtesy of The Newport Historical Society.

Marlborough Street and its surrounding neighborhood were still thriving economically during the late nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century. The map clearly depicts the headquarters of the city fire department, the jail, the Methodist Church, and Great Friends Meeting House. A major difference to note is the expansion in house sizes. While it was clear in previous maps that homes were added on to over time, it is especially recognizable at this point in time (Figure 18). It is likely that many homes housed multiple families due to the influx of immigrants. It is also important to note that many homes are listed under the same last names as they had been during the nineteenth century, with family heirs taking ownership over properties after members from the previous generation had passed away.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ L.J. Richards, "1907 - Atlas of the City of Newport", *The Newport Map Project*, Web. 5 Oct. 2017, <http://newportmapproject.weebly.com/1907---atlas-of-newport.html>.

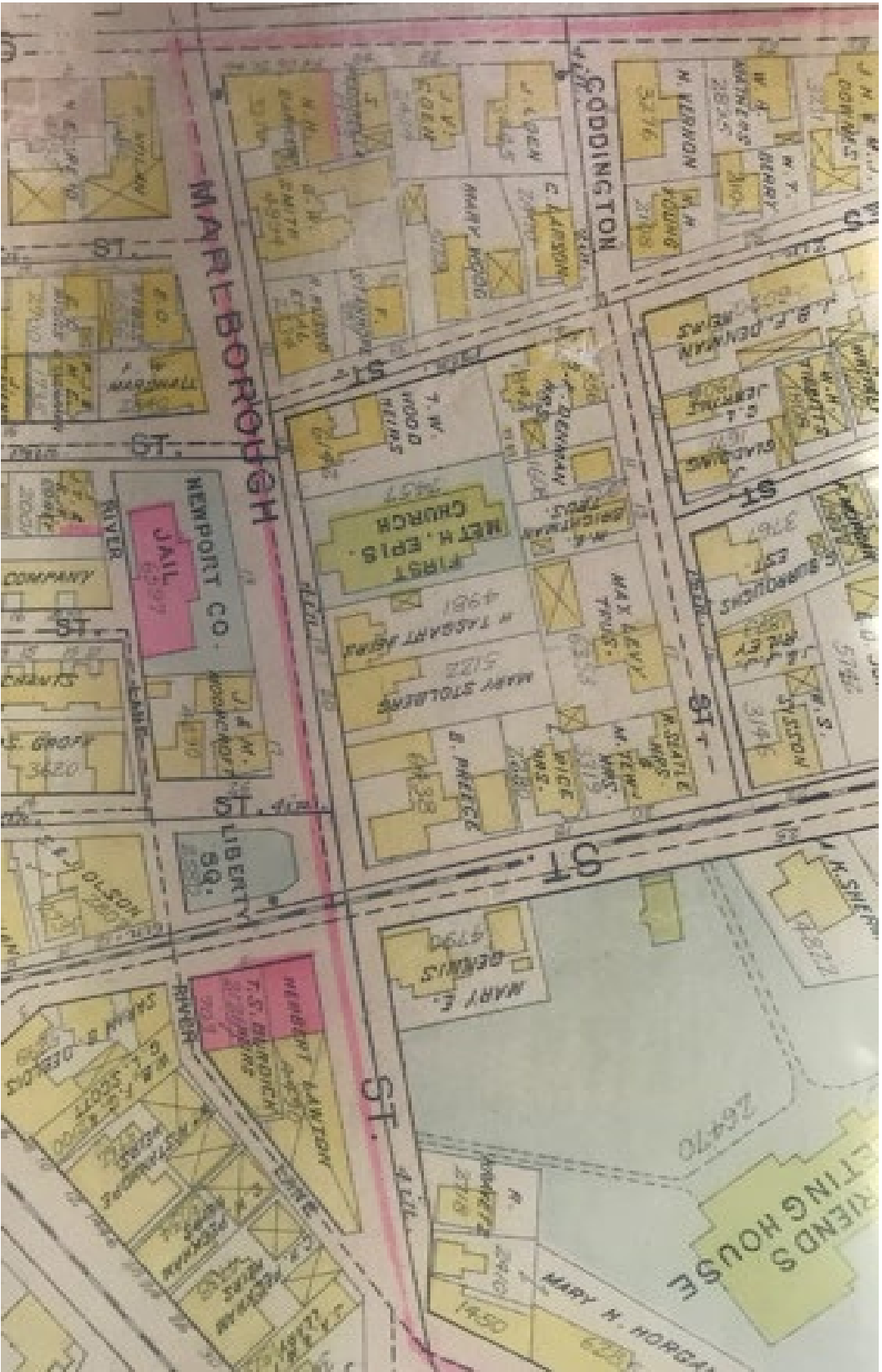


Figure 18: 1907 Map of Marlborough Street, Newport. Created by L. J. Richards. Courtesy of Newport City Hall.

By 1921, the street appeared just as dense as it had in the late nineteenth century, with more additions and ell's added onto its structures. Also, by the turn of the twentieth century, the landscape of the West Broadway Neighborhood remained primarily for the working class.⁶⁹ The city itself continued to flourish well into the early twentieth century due to summer residents and the West Broadway neighborhood continued to grow in population due to the numbers of immigrants coming in. Per the report, “the West Broadway Neighborhood remained an ethnically diverse and racially integrated, working-class residential area in the 20th century.”⁷⁰ A halt in construction was seen by the 1920s because much of the land had already been built on.⁷¹ The population in the city had nearly doubled by this time. Where it stood at 15,693 in 1880, it rose to 30,255 by 1920.⁷² It was not long after that the Great Depression struck, causing yet again, another major change in the city’s physical landscape and economy. The City’s population dropped from 30,255 in 1920 to 27,612 in 1930.⁷³

⁶⁹ The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report,” 17.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 30.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² “Rhode Island Population by City, Town, and County: 1790-2010.”

⁷³ “Rhode Island Population by City, Town, and County: 1790-2010.”

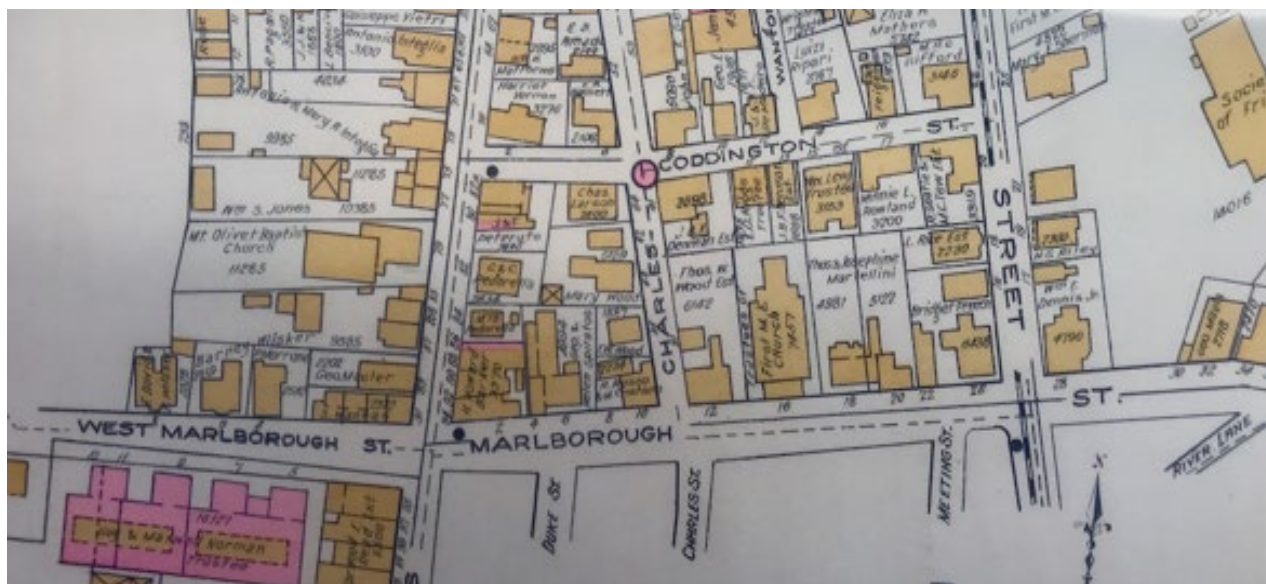


Figure 19: 1921 Map of Marlborough Street, Newport. Created by the Sanborn Map Company. Courtesy of Newport City Hall.

Period 5: Decline II (1929-1973)

Once the stock market crashed in 1929, Newport's second Golden Age came to an end. Wealthy elites were forced to flee the city and it was no longer a vibrant summer location.⁷⁴ Although these crowds left, Newport continued to welcome many new ethnicities of people to the city.⁷⁵ In its earliest years of settlement, the city had been mostly made up of African Americans, Jews, Native Americans, and English settlers. By the twentieth century, it welcomed Hispanics, Portuguese, Greeks, Italians, Irish, and more.⁷⁶ The city was much more diverse than it had ever been.⁷⁷ Unfortunately, with the rise of poverty in the city, many historic buildings were neglected as they once had been during the time of the Revolution. Several buildings on Marlborough Street were among the demolished or highly neglected. The West Broadway Neighborhood Report states "housing in the West Broadway residential area deteriorated during

⁷⁴ Sara Butler, "Introducing Newport", Lecture, "Newport Seminar", Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI, August 31, 2016.

⁷⁵ "A Brief History of Newport," *Newport Historical Society: History Starts Here*, 2018, <http://newporthistory.org/about/brief-history-of-newport/>.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ *The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report*, 30.

the mid 20th century because of poverty, neighborhood disinterest, poor maintenance, and housing abandonment”⁷⁸ Although the economy was struck by the occurrence of the Great Depression, it briefly revived once World War II came to an end in 1945.⁷⁹ Between 1945 and the early 1970s, “bars, nightclubs, and saloons [were opened] which catered to sailors and flourished on River Lane, Marlborough Street, Broadway, and West Broadway.”⁸⁰ The population in the city reached its all-time high in 1960, standing at 47,049.⁸¹ Demolition among these buildings continued throughout the 1960s and 70s. Much of this neglect continued throughout the years of World War II and after. This period brought an entirely new way of thinking about preservation. In his essay, architectural historian John R. Tschirch states “A new social order and modernist aesthetics had arrived in full force upon the scene. Financially, old structures were largely seen as economic burdens.”⁸² Interestingly, the population saw a loss of over 10,000 between 1960 and 1970. In 1970, the population dropped from 47,049 in 1960 to 34,562 in 1970.⁸³

Photographic evidence from the 1960s provides two examples of historic homes that were demolished on Marlborough Street because of “demolition by neglect” that was commonly seen in the city during this time.⁸⁴ The photographs below captures several historic buildings located in the nineteenth century (Figures 20,22,23, &24). It is unfortunate that out of these structures, the only three that remain today are St. Paul’s Methodist Church and The Judge

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ “Rhode Island Population by City, Town, and County: 1790-2010.”

⁸² John R. Tschirch, *Mapping the Newport Experience: A History of the City’s Urban Development*, <http://www.newporthistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/NHSMapping-NewportEssayFinal.pdf>. 63.

⁸³ “Rhode Island Population by City, Town, and County: 1790-2010.”

⁸⁴ “Demolition by Neglect”, *The National Trust for Historic Preservation*, (Washington D.C.: 2009).

Samuel Stern House (the third structure in from the right), and the John Coddington House (partially pictured on the far left) (Figure 21).



Figure 20: Historic home next to the Jailhouse on Marlborough Street undergoing demolition in the early 20th century. Courtesy of The Newport Historical Society.



Figure 21: View of Marlborough Street in twentieth century. Courtesy of The Newport Historical Society.



Figures 22 & 23: Examples of two early homes on Marlborough Street that were demolished during the twentieth century. Courtesy of The Newport Historical Society.



Figure 24: Example of a home on Marlborough Street that was demolished during the twentieth century. Courtesy of The Newport Historical Society.

While this period saw a great deal of newer construction and demolition of historic buildings, the establishment of the Preservation Society of Newport County assisted in purchasing some of these structures so that they would not for-go future demolition or

continuation of neglect. The Society purchased three structures in the area: The Great Friends Meeting House, The White Horse Tavern, and the Jailhouse.⁸⁵ In 1971, the John Coddington House was purchased by the Newport Restoration Foundation and underwent a major restoration between 1973 and 1974 (Figure 25).⁸⁶ So, while many resources were lost, the city eventually bounced back and took action by establishing these types of organizations to ensure that these buildings would be safeguarded for future appreciation.



Figure 25: Photograph of the John Coddington House in a dilapidated state, circa 1970s. Courtesy of The Newport Restoration Foundation.

⁸⁵ "The Preservation Society of Newport County," 2018, <http://www.newportmansions.org/>.

⁸⁶ "Historic Houses-John Coddington House," *The Newport Restoration Foundation*, 2009-2018, https://www.newportrestoration.org/preservation/historic_houses/details/3-john_coddington.

The White Horse Tavern – Evidence of a Shift in the Mid-Twentieth Century Economy

An example showing economic downturn during this period is seen with the White Horse Tavern, that was previously discussed in this chapter. A series of articles found at the Newport Historical Society tells how the tavern struggled financially during the twentieth century. As early as 1910, the building had been vacant for several years and was in desperate need of preservation. The owner at the time mentions his interest in wanted to preserve the building and that there is a growing interest in historic preservation, in general during the early twentieth century.⁸⁷ Later, in 1955, preservation efforts were made to the building once again. The building was not preserved properly in efforts made forty years earlier by the previous owner. At this time, the owner hired an architect named Jerry D. Lither, who discovered how the building originally stood. He indicated that was a two-story home with only two rooms and was later restored around 1780.⁸⁸ It is clear that while other tragedies involving historic buildings on the street are occurring at this time, there was still an interest in preserving resources, as well. A Newport man named William F. Preece purchased the building in 1954 and had it open for business again by 1957.⁸⁹ Only a short while later, the business struggled immensely due to the fact that they could serve alcohol to patrons. The business of the restaurant plummets for this reason.⁹⁰ In 1963, the uproar of anger by St. Paul's Methodist Church on Marlborough prevented White Horse Tavern from being able to sell liquor. At this time, taverns and restaurants were unable to sell liquor if they stood within 200 feet of a church.⁹¹ The tavern was closed for business again in 1964.⁹² Again, a shift is seen in Marlborough Street's landscape. Where this

⁸⁷ "As a Colonial Museum," (Newport, RI), April 15, 1910.

⁸⁸ "Restoring Colonial Building Like Working a Big Puzzle," (Newport, RI), Dec. 4, 1955.

⁸⁹ "Preservation Society's only Financial Flop, it Couldn't Break Even," (Newport, RI), Feb. 9, 1967.

⁹⁰ "White Horse Tavern Can't Get License," *Fall River Herald* (Fall River, MA), Feb. 1, 1960.

⁹¹ "Church - Liquor Controversy Raging," (Newport, RI), circa 1963.

⁹² "Preservation Society's only Financial Flop, it Couldn't Break Even," (Newport, RI), Feb. 9, 1967.

section of the city was once lively with activity, partially to do with the tavern's ability to serve alcohol to patrons, it became more strongly revolved around religion as it once had in its earlier centuries.⁹³ Unfortunately, the struggle continued into the late 1960s.⁹⁴ In 1967, the White Horse Tavern was the biggest loss for its owner (The Preservation Society of Newport County).⁹⁵ At the time, the organization did not have the funds to maintain the building, which was said to be about \$100,000 in costs overall.⁹⁶ The closing of the tavern was short lived, when it was opened once again in 1970, according to an article written in the Sunday Providence Journal.⁹⁷ Quite unfortunately again, the tavern did not thrive in business for long when a massive fire struck the building, less than two months after it re-opened.⁹⁸ Much of the building's fabric was destroyed in this fire, including its: windows, roof, and exterior paint.⁹⁹

The building recovered from the fire, being restored once again.¹⁰⁰ However, it was shut down for the second time in three years in 1977, when businesses were generally failing on Marlborough Street and nearby.¹⁰¹ Fortunately for Marlborough Street and the White Horse Tavern, the economy bounces back at the end of the 1970s.¹⁰² In 1979, business begins to finally boom again. Customers entail that the food being served is delicious and are once again raving about the business.¹⁰³ It is unclear how well other businesses were doing on the street in the later years of the twentieth century but, the White Horse Tavern only remained up and running for

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ "Preservation Society's only Financial Flop, it Couldn't Break Even," (Newport, RI), Feb. 9, 1967.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Jack White, "Historic Tavern Opens," *Providence Sunday Journal* (Providence, RI), May 31, 1970.

⁹⁸ "Tavern Closed by Blaze," (Newport, RI), June 27, 1970.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ William M. Kutik, "White Horse Tavern Closes Again," (Newport, RI), November 28, 1977.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² "Newport Landmark gets back on the fine dining track," (Newport, RI), Aug. 17, 1979.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

about a year and a half before it went bankrupt yet again.¹⁰⁴ In 1980, the owner at the time owed over \$100,000 in debts.¹⁰⁵ Finally in 1981, the Preservation Society of Newport County decided to sell the tavern because they could not afford to pay the expenses with the lack of business it was bringing in.¹⁰⁶ The director at the time stated that “past business failures and lack of parking on the street” caused its decline. He also mentioned that “Marlborough Street was out of the mainstream activity of the city.”¹⁰⁷ These late twentieth century articles provide insight to not only the fluctuation of the White Horse Tavern as a business, but the entire street. If a famous landmark in the city struggled to stay open, it is likely that other businesses were struggling as well. The 1980s was likely the start of when Marlborough Street began to spiral downward in terms of economic vitality.

¹⁰⁴ Catherine Callahan, “White Horse to Open under Bankruptcy Rule,” (Newport, RI), Dec. 29, 1980.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Kan D. Blankenship, “America’s Oldest Tavern is Sold by Newport Society,” (Newport, RI). Aug. 19, 1981.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.



Figure 26: The White Horse Tavern on the corner of Marlborough and Farewell Street's. Photograph date unknown. Courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

Period 6: 1973-Present

The RIHPHC report, outlined the main ongoing Preservation issues that existed in the neighborhood as of 1977. The report states that “the West Broadway neighborhood is the city’s most densely populated residential area, consisting of approximately 443 housing units, each occupied by an average of 2.9 persons.”¹⁰⁸ The landscape itself was also in desperate need of repair. The report indicates that its buildings were in dire need of rehabilitations and restorations. There were also many vacant lots by this time due to demolition by neglect. Next, it states that “poorly designed modern residential and commercial buildings have contributed to the

¹⁰⁸ The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report,” 32.

disintegration of the neighborhood's fabric."¹⁰⁹ The businesses themselves were also struggling greatly, not bringing in the same cash flow that they once had. The struggling businesses had little to invest in storefront maintenance at this time, therefore were also unable to focus attention toward restoring the historic conditions of the buildings themselves. Luckily, in 1974 the Housing and Community Development Act granted the city \$5,000,000 to go toward reviving the West Broadway Neighborhood, because it stood in the greatest disrepair in comparison to other neighborhoods in the city.¹¹⁰ While efforts were indeed sought out over the previous years, Marlborough Street still suffers from much of what was mentioned in the report written in 1977, primarily with the issue of modern buildings harming its overall character, and modern additions ruining the fabric on existing historic buildings. It's neighboring street, America's Cup Avenue follows a similar pattern, primarily existing of twentieth century infill such as hotels, commercial spaces, a bus station. Its most notable site is Cardines Field which is located on the corner of America's Cup Ave and West Marlborough Street (Figure 27). Chapter Two will cover more in depth, the existing conditions of the street as of the beginning of 2018.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.



Figure 27: Detail showing location of America's Cup Ave in relation to West Marlborough Street. Map Courtesy of Google Maps.

Chapter 2: Marlborough Street Today: An Analysis of Existing Conditions

This chapter presents and analyzes the current conditions of Marlborough Street today and focuses on the presence of historic properties and cultural landscape features that reflect the long history of the street. The evidence discussed is depicted through photographs and maps, as well as historical information about specific structures that have played a major role in constructing the street's overall character. Analyzing the street in its current state is important to this study because it creates the basis on which Chapter Three focuses: future recommendations for the interpretation and revitalization of the street. The map below color codes buildings on the street per the period in which they were constructed. This gives a visual representation of the layers of construction periods starting from as early as the seventeenth century (Figure 28).



Figure 28: Map Detail showing periods of development on Marlborough Street. Map courtesy of the City of Newport.

Site Research

Marlborough Street was surveyed in its current state (January 2018) to determine how it has evolved from the layers evident from past time periods. There appears to be an even mix between properly and poorly maintained historic buildings as well as late twentieth century styled buildings on the street today. Its most notable historic resources such as The Great Friends Meeting House, the White Horse Tavern, the Jailhouse, and St. Paul's Methodist Church stand in remarkable condition. The two most notable historic homes that have been preserved on the street are the John Coddington House and the Judge Samuel Stern House (circa 1848).



Aerial View of Marlborough Street Today. Courtesy of American Fact Finder. Courtesy of the United States Census Bureau.

- A. The Great Friends Meeting House
- B. The Whitehorse Tavern
- C. St. Paul's United Methodist Church
- D. The Jailhouse Inn
- E. The John Coddington House

The West Broadway Neighborhood Statewide Historical Preservation Report *RIHPHC* that was published in 1977 by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission conducted an analysis of the West Broadway Neighborhood back in the 1970s. This publication touched on the existing conditions of the area and moved on to discuss recommendations to

better its overall landscape in the future.¹¹¹ This chapter will use a similar method to the RIHPHC. This method includes: examining the existing conditions of the street, beginning from the late seventeenth century and leading up until present day. With this, it will discover existing layers in the landscape that have developed throughout time.

Analyzing Existing Layers in the Cultural Landscape

Before analyzing Marlborough Street's cultural landscape today and layers that still exist from points of time in history, it is important to understand what a cultural landscape analysis is. In simple terms a cultural landscape is defined as: "the interweaving of a specific group and their spaces."¹¹² It is also crucial to understand that a cultural landscape is something that is always changing, due to the beliefs of groups of people who settle in a place at different points in time.¹¹³ There are seven key processes that map out the key features to look out for when creating a cultural landscape analysis¹¹⁴:

- The inertia of nature: attention to how nature is affecting the landscape (i.e. weather and agriculture)
- Connection: how the people who settle on a specific landscape are connected to other landscapes (i.e. roads)
- Migration, immigration, invasion, and other movements of people: how specific groups of individuals who have moved from another region affect the landscape (i.e. places of worship, restaurants)
- First settlement and the inertia of existing cultural resources: Impressions made by people who have settled on the landscape in the past (i.e. street names, historic land use, original street grid)
- Basic economics: how the economy has had an impact on the landscape (i.e. production, household investments, cycles of investment in buildings)

¹¹¹ "The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report."

¹¹² Elaine Stiles, "Cultural Landscape Foundation," Lecture, "American Cultural Landscapes," Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI, January 25, 2018.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Elaine Stiles, "Reading Place Assignment 4: Processes at Play," Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI, Spring 2019.

- Reinforcing individual and social identities: how the landscape portrays the identities of its citizens (i.e. places of work, religious buildings, households)
- Sparking new ideas and diffusion of innovations (architectural styles, patterns in ways people are adding to the physical landscape)

These processes will be applied to the historical evidence of Marlborough Street that was discovered in Chapter One, to best answer the question as to how its landscape has been shaped throughout time by the individuals who settled there. The goal of this analysis is to determine how the impact of individuals who have settled there over time have shaped the street into what it exists as today.

As emphasized previously, those who have settled on Marlborough Street have made a significant amount of changes to its landscape over time, which makes it difficult to notice many of the older layers that pertain to its history. However, some can be depicted after doing research. It is obvious that since the earliest years, the street has been a mixed-use landscape. One major aspect to point out is that the current landscape of commercial properties is consistent with its historical use as a landscape that housed several small-scale commercial activities. Chapter One discussed that since the earliest years of its establishment, Marlborough Street has been a center for commercial use. With the Marlborough Dock bringing in goods between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, businesses to process and sell these goods were constructed on the street.¹¹⁵ Later, during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, small businesses were still widely a part of the landscape, mainly to accommodate the needs of the growing population of working class citizens.¹¹⁶ Today, this can still be widely seen throughout Marlborough. Many small businesses

¹¹⁵ The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report,” *The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission*, March 1977, http://www.preservation.ri.gov/pdfs_zips_downloads/survey_pdfs/newport_wbway.pdf.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

are located on the first floors of mixed-use buildings. There are also some buildings that were constructed later the street, to just accommodate commercial uses.

A second layer depicted on the street can be seen through preservation activity and influence from preservation organizations as well as the expansion of the historic district, which now covers about eighty percent of the area. While not all buildings on the street have been preserved according to historic preservation principles, the buildings that have been preserved make a major contribution to the landscape by restoring them back to a specific point and time and educating the modern-day society. For example, the Great Friends Meeting House was restored back to how it would have appeared in the early 1800s.¹¹⁷ With the removal of other properties that were previously built on its site, one can appreciate how the surrounding landscape was once used as a community gathering space. Individuals can take advantage of that by using the grounds today and attending events that are set up there.

Also, although RIHPHC tells us in their report that the street and its surrounding neighborhood primarily housed members of the working class, the social status of those who live there today is not entirely certain.¹¹⁸ However, the median household income provided by the latest US census survey (between 2013 and 2017) indicates that most the households on Marlborough and West Marlborough Streets bring home a yearly income between \$62,000 and \$84,000 (Figure 29), telling that this area is primarily made up of upper middle class residents.¹¹⁹ This evidence alone shows that the area has changed demographically over time.

¹¹⁷ “Great Friends Meeting House,” *The Newport Historical Society: History Starts Here*, 2018, <http://newporthistory.org/properties/great-friends-meeting-house/>.

¹¹⁸ The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report.”

¹¹⁹ Policy Map. “Estimated typical (median) income of a household between 2013-2017,” Accessed March 14, 2019. <http://rwu.policymap.com.rwulib.idm.oclc.org/maps>.

Estimated typical (median) income of a household between 2013-2017. ▾

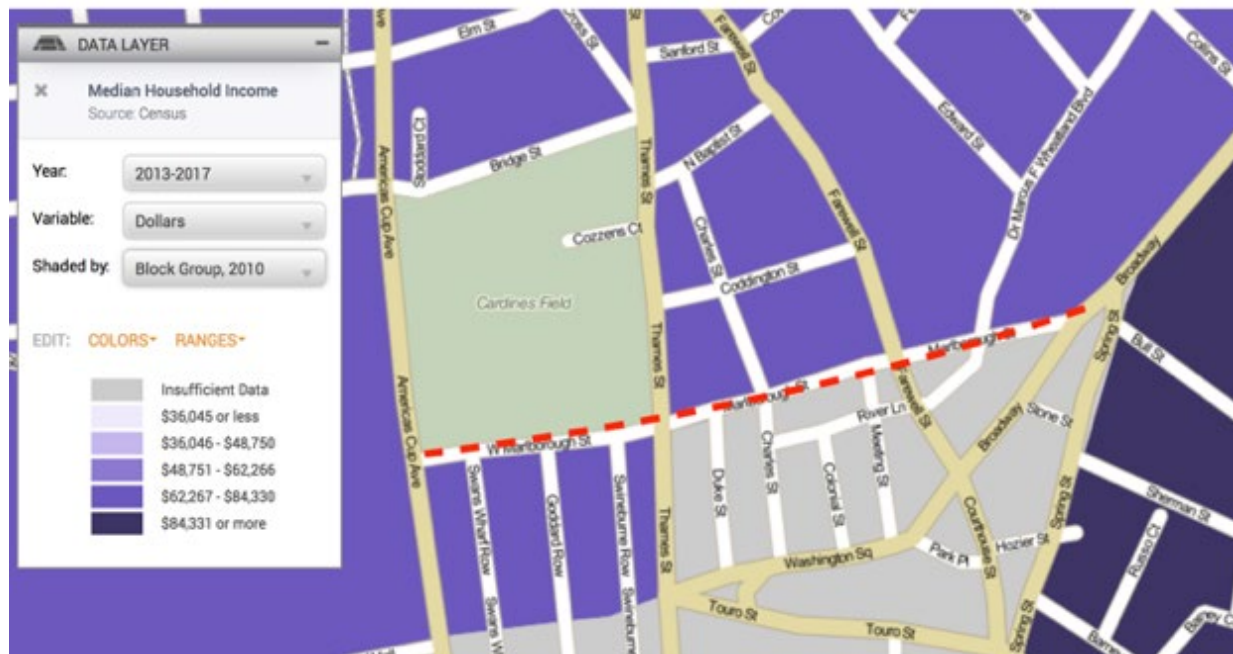


Figure 29: Map showing the median income of households on Marlborough Street between 2013 and 2017. Courtesy of Policy Map.

Surviving History of Marlborough: Determining Evident Layers on the Street

Late Seventeenth Century - Eighteenth Century

Preservation efforts made during the later portion of the twentieth century have assisted in showing some of the earliest layers on the street. Much of these layers are seen in the oldest surviving structures on the street that have been properly restored to their original appearances. It is safe to say that layers from this period makes up most the historical context that can be seen today.

Street Plan

A major aspect to be noted about the streets physical appearance today can be seen from as early as 1712, being the overall road layout of Marlborough Street. The two maps below show the similarities in street design over a three-hundred-year time difference. The Street appears almost identical to how it looked in the 1712 Mumford Map in terms of its aerial view. which is

the earliest known map of Newport to have been drawn up with street names.¹²⁰ While a few intersecting roads were added over time, many of the original roads remain today, of course with certain street names being changed.¹²¹ It is not until the creation of the 1777 city map that similarities can be seen between specific structures and open space that are noted on Marlborough Street today (Figures 30 and 31). While these more generalized aspects tell part of Marlborough Streets story, a few notable structures from this period assist in telling more specified information as to how the street has developed into what it is today.

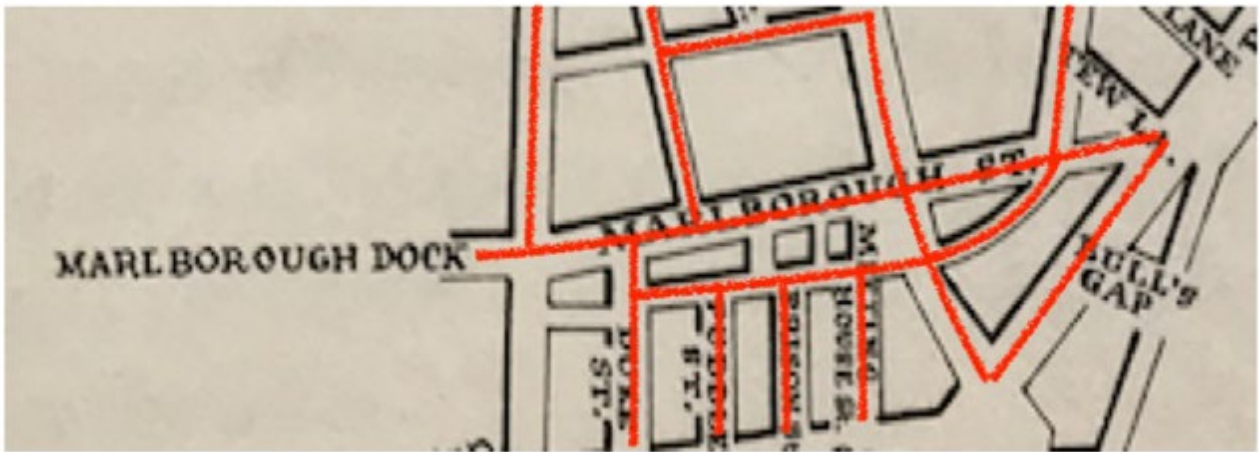


Figure 30: Detail, 1712 Map of Marlborough Street, Newport. Created by Charles Mumford. Courtesy of Newport City Hall.

¹²⁰ John Mumford, "The Mumford Map of 1712", *Newportal*, Web. 12 Feb. <http://newportalri.org/items/show/13658>.

¹²¹ "Marlborough Street," Google Maps, accessed March 20, 2019, <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Marlborough+St,+Newport,+RI+02840/@41.4906472,-71.3162871,542m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m5!3m4!1s0x89e5af6a49bc3c2d:0xabc2ff1c1ec9fff3!8m2!3d41.4912079!4d-71.3137756>.

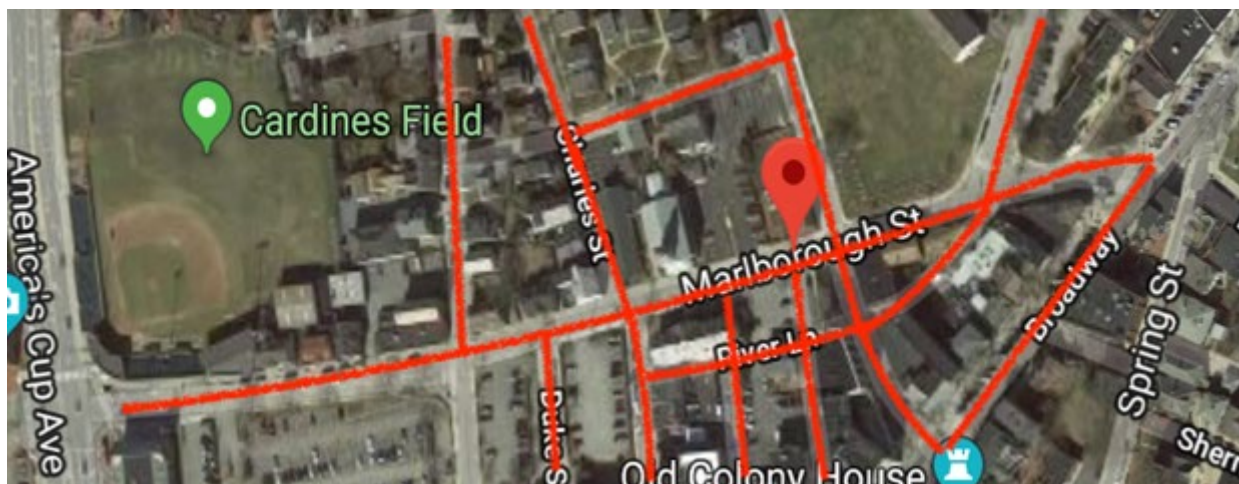


Figure 31: Aerial View of Marlborough Street today. Courtesy of Google Maps.

Architectural Evidence

A notable example of a building that calls attention to this period is the White Horse Tavern, which holds an important reputation as “the oldest bar in America” and certainly brings popularity to the Street, especially during the summer months when tourists are visiting the City.¹²² Located directly next to the Great Friends Meeting House, it adds on to the picturesque, historic landscape of the street. Despite its physical appearance however, it provides evidence as to what the social experience on the street was like during its earlier years. The tavern can tell that its location on Marlborough Street drew in male patrons who came to socialize.

The White Horse Tavern has been well restored and maintained since the time of its last purchase in the late twentieth century (Figure 32).¹²³ It is important to note that this is the only business on the street that continues to keep the historic culture of its being alive, serving as example of how an early tavern would have operated several centuries ago. This allows guests be

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.

educated on some of the lively history that once took place Marlborough Street hundreds of years ago.¹²⁴



Figure 32: The Whitehorse Tavern as it stands today (26 Marlborough St.), Photographed by: Arianna Marchetti, 11 Jan. 2018.

A second notable example on the street is the Great Friends Meeting House (Figure 33). Being the first known religious gathering space in the State of Rhode Island, it serves as one of

¹²⁴ Ibid.

Newport's most reputable historic resources.¹²⁵ It shows the long history in which the city holds, serving as the meeting place for the Quakers, who were some of the first settlers in the seventeenth century.¹²⁶ Like the White Horse Tavern, it provides evidence that Marlborough Street was both a place of socialization and religious gathering in its earliest years.

The building endured a series of alterations over the years. Evidence shows that it was expanded twice during the eighteenth century, once in 1705 and again in 1729. These expansions were made to accommodate the growing numbers of Quakers migrating to the city during this period.¹²⁷ Three more alterations were made to the building in the 19th century: 1807, 1857, and 1867. The number of expansions during the seventeenth and eighteenth century prove that the city was a popular place of settlement for the Quakers.¹²⁸ By the end of the nineteenth and turn of the twentieth centuries, the number of Quakers in Newport began to recess, and the Great Friends Meeting House was eventually abandoned by them. Throughout the twentieth century, it found its new use as a city recreation center.¹²⁹ By 1960, the building was in desperate need of a restoration, as it has been neglected architecturally for years. A Jamestown family bought the building in 1967 and restored it back to its 1807 appearance. All historic structures that were once built on its grounds were demolished over the years, as well. If it were to be restored to an earlier year, it would have been much smaller in size and would have lost much of its historic material that had gained its own significance over time.¹³⁰ Today, the building is managed by the Newport Historical Society and is used as a museum and event space.¹³¹ It sits on a large

¹²⁵ "Marlborough Street," *The Great Friends Meeting House (1699)*, 2017, <https://newport.oncell.com/en/great-friends-meeting-house-7031.html>.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ "GFMH in the 20th century," *The Great Friends Meeting House (1699)*, 2017, <https://newport.oncell.com/en/gmfh-in-the-20th-century-8361.html>.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ "Great Friends Meeting House," *The Newport Historical Society: History Starts Here*, 2018,

parcel of land and provides a picturesque view from Marlborough Street. It is certainly one of its most eye-catching features, providing a view that was highly similar to how it had once been two centuries ago.



Figure 33: *The Great Friends Meeting House as it stands today (21 Farewell Street), Photographed by: Arianna Marchetti, 11 Jan. 2018.*

A third example is seen in what is known today as the Jailhouse Inn (Figure 34). Being the only jail ever built in the city of Newport, the building provides quite a unique character to the history of Marlborough Street. Interestingly, this was the second jail that was built on the site.¹³² The former 1680 structure was demolished to incorporate a new and larger jail to house criminals from “the whole colony”.¹³³ The building was renovated twice in 1800 and later in

<http://newporthistory.org/properties/great-friends-meeting-house/>.

¹³² “Our Story,” *The Jailhouse Inn*, 2018, Web. 19 March 2018, <https://jailhouse.com/content/our-story-0>.

¹³³ Ibid.

1888. Per its website: “the jail was never considered a particularly strong place...and there were several escapes.”¹³⁴ Eventually, the jail was totally unsuccessful, and the building was taken over by the Newport Police Department and served as its headquarters. In 1986, a new police department was constructed on Broadway Street and the jail was rehabilitated into a hotel, which remains active today. It is called the Jailhouse Inn.¹³⁵ Despite Marlborough’s lack of activity today, the cost of rooms at the hotel range between two hundred and three hundred dollars a night, mainly because it is near the main activity occurring on Thames Street and Broadway Street, both adjacent to Marlborough.



Figure 34: The Jailhouse Inn as it stands today (13 Marlborough Street), Photographed by: Arianna Marchetti, 11 Jan. 2018.

While these three structures differ greatly in style, they are all clear examples of structures that provide Marlborough Street with the rich historic character it has today. The emphasis of these structures is very important when analyzing its earliest layers. This is because

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

they are the only surviving examples from this period that provide proof of how the street functioned within the community. Smaller features like sidewalks, walls, and fences no longer exist from the seventeenth and eighteenth century. However, these beautiful restored early buildings can help give a sense of how the street functioned all these years ago.

Nineteenth Century – Early Twentieth Century

Street Plan and Photographic Evidence

By the nineteenth century, the development of photography assisted in telling how Marlborough Street appeared both physically from the view of the street and how it functioned on a day to day basis. For example, the photo below, taken in the mid – nineteenth century shows three important features of the landscape (Figure 35).¹³⁶ The first is the number of mixed-use buildings on the street. Almost every structure in the image depicts storefronts on the lower levels and what appears to be probable living spaces on the upper levels. Second, the photograph depicts daily activity occurring, with horse and wagons being used as a means of transportation as well as some patrons walking the street on foot. Some of the wagons appear to be used for commercial purposes and others for leisure. Lastly, this photograph gives a sense of the physical landscape in terms of the roads, sidewalks, and trees.

A similar view is seen in the current day photograph (Figure 36). While this image does not depict the exact same location, it shows a similar view from the street, with mixed use buildings that include commercial spaces on the first floors and living spaces on the upper floors. While the photo was taken during the winter, evidence of greenery can still be noticed along the sides of the streets, like the mid-nineteenth century photograph. Lastly, while the sidewalks have

¹³⁶ Rob Lewis, *Images of America: Newport*. Dover, (New Hampshire: Arcadia Publishing, 1996), 121.

appeared to have narrowed since this time, the road remains wide, with plenty of space for two-way traffic to pass through.

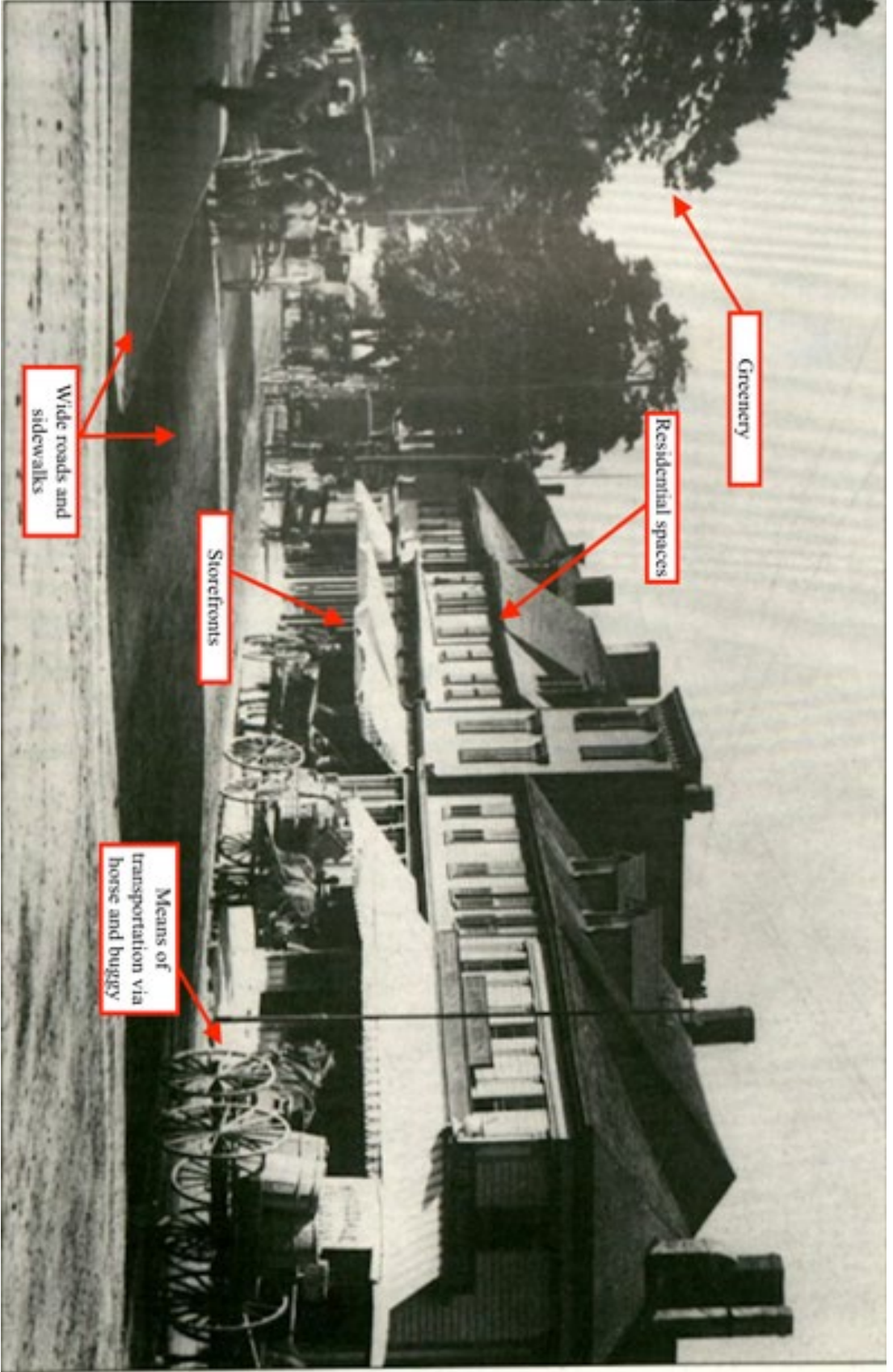


Figure 35: View of Marlborough Street (right side) bustling with activity in the mid - 19th century. Courtesy of The Images of America Series.



Figure 36: View of West Marlborough Street. Photo taken by: Arianna Marchetti, 11 Jan. 2018.

Much of what is seen on Marlborough Street today in terms of lot division can related back to the mid nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. By this period, advancements in map creations were also made to give a more detailed sense of lot division and ownership in the City.¹³⁷ Photographs from these periods also assist in giving an idea of the day to day functions of the area. The similarity of lot divisions is clearly entailed between the 1907 City Atlas of Newport and the current day aerial view of the street.¹³⁸ The maps below show the similarities in lot divisions over a one-hundred-year time difference (Figures 37 and 38). It is also crucial to note the difference in density between the two maps. In 1907, there were very few vacant lots at all on the street and appeared to have many structures built close to one another. Today however, many of these structures have been demolished and there are far more open spaces (parking

¹³⁷ "1850 – Map of the City of Newport", *Newport City Hall*.

¹³⁸ L.J. Richards, "1907 - Atlas of the City of Newport", *The Newport Map Project*, Web. 5 Oct. 2017.

lots).¹³⁹ It is key to note that the major reason for why the street decreased in terms of density during the twentieth century had much to do with neglect.¹⁴⁰ As mentioned in Chapter One, many residents were forced to vacate the city during the time of the Great Depression in the 1930s, or lived in poor conditions which eventually led to the neglect and demolition of several buildings by the time efforts were trying to be made to revitalize Newport in the 1970s.¹⁴¹



Figure 37: Detail from the 1907 City Atlas of the City of Newport showing similarity in lot divisions to Marlborough Street today.

¹³⁹ "Marlborough Street," Google Maps, accessed March 20, 2019.

¹⁴⁰ Sara Butler, "Introducing Newport", Lecture, "Newport Seminar", Roger Williams University, Bristol, RI, August 31, 2016.

¹⁴¹ "The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report," 17.

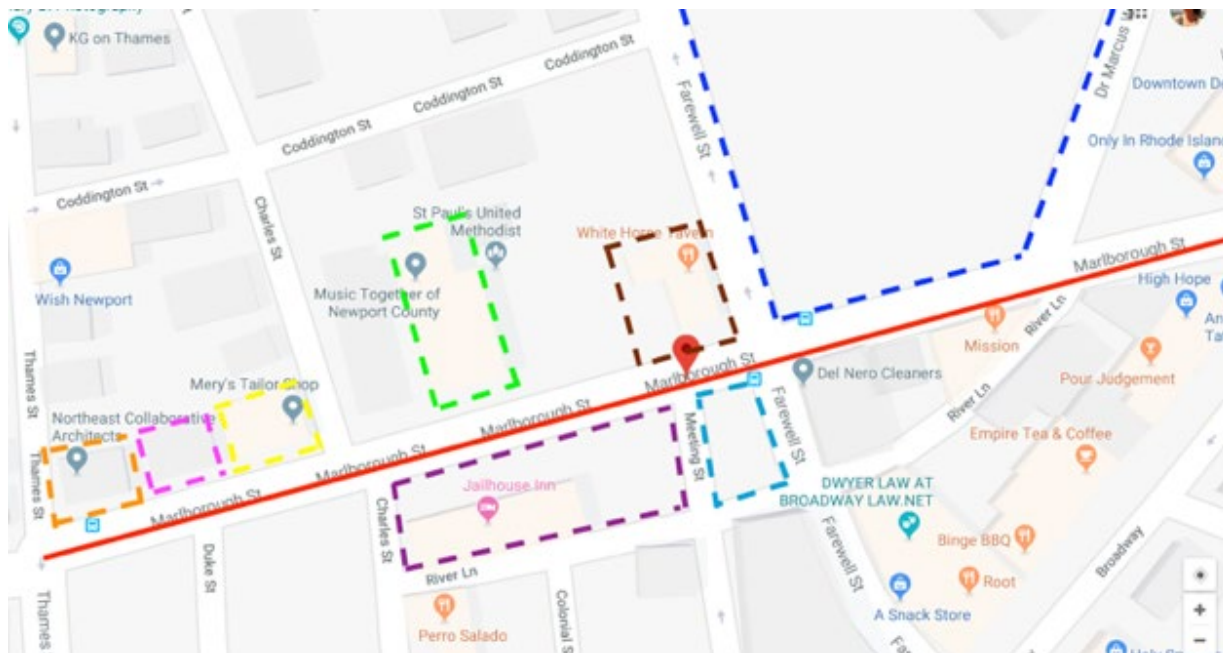


Figure 38: Google Map view of Marlborough Street today showing similarity in lot divisions to the 1907 Atlas of the City of Newport's view of the street.

Architectural Evidence

Like the Great Friends Meeting House, the Methodist Church on Marlborough Street as one of the city's earliest surviving religious gathering places (Figure 39). However, it serves another importance as the first Methodist Church ever built with a steeple and bell.¹⁴² Prior to its erection, members were meeting in much smaller gathering spaces. However, throughout the nineteenth century, the Methodist community in Newport was growing larger, much like the Quaker community did throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In 1842, the Church was expanded, adding a second story on to it, which is still visible today. Throughout the twentieth century, its membership began to grow, drawing in individuals from other Methodist Churches in the city. It became the official meeting place for Newport Methodists in 1922.¹⁴³ By 1960, the historic Townsend Parish House that sat directly next to the Church was demolished

¹⁴² "Historic St. Paul's," *Saint Paul's Methodist Faith Community*, 2018, <http://www.stpaulsumcnewportri.com/>.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

due to neglect. It was not until 1987 that the Church was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or the parish house likely could have been saved. Instead, a new, modern addition was added on to the Church in the 60s to accommodate classroom space and offices.¹⁴⁴ Although it is unclear when exactly, a historic structure was also demolished on the right side of the Church to accommodate a parking lot for Church members. This addition is a prime example of the modern movement that occurred during this era, demolishing historic structures rather than restoring them, and replacing them with modern construction. Between 2010 and 2017, many repairs and restoration projects have been conducted on the Church. It still operates as a Methodist Church today and has received a few donations and grants to keep its historic appearance intact, primarily focusing its attention toward its famous steeple and bell.¹⁴⁵ It is interesting to note that between the Methodist Church and the Great Friends Meeting House, Marlborough Street was a highly functioning religious and diverse area of the city between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries. It is obvious now that the culture on Marlborough Street has shifted focus toward commerce rather than religion due to the number of storefronts that can now be found.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.



Figure 39: St. Paul's Methodist Church as it stands today (12 Marlborough St.), Photographed by: Arianna Marchetti, 11 Jan. 2018.

Late Twentieth Century – Present

The late twentieth-century infill mostly pertains to West Marlborough Street and its connecting street, America's Cup Avenue. A major example of this is seen at the location of the Shops at Long Wharf, located on 39 Long Wharf Mall, just off West Marlborough Street. The site stands on what was formerly the Newport Manufacturing Company, which is noted on the 1876 Map of Newport (Figure 40).¹⁴⁶ Today, the strip mall consists of gift shops and chain retail stores that draw in both residents and summer tourists (Figures 41 and 42).

¹⁴⁶ G.M. Hopkins, "1876 – City Atlas of Newport", *The Newport Map Project*, Web. 5 Oct. <http://newportmapproject.weebly.com/1876---atlas-of-newport.html>.

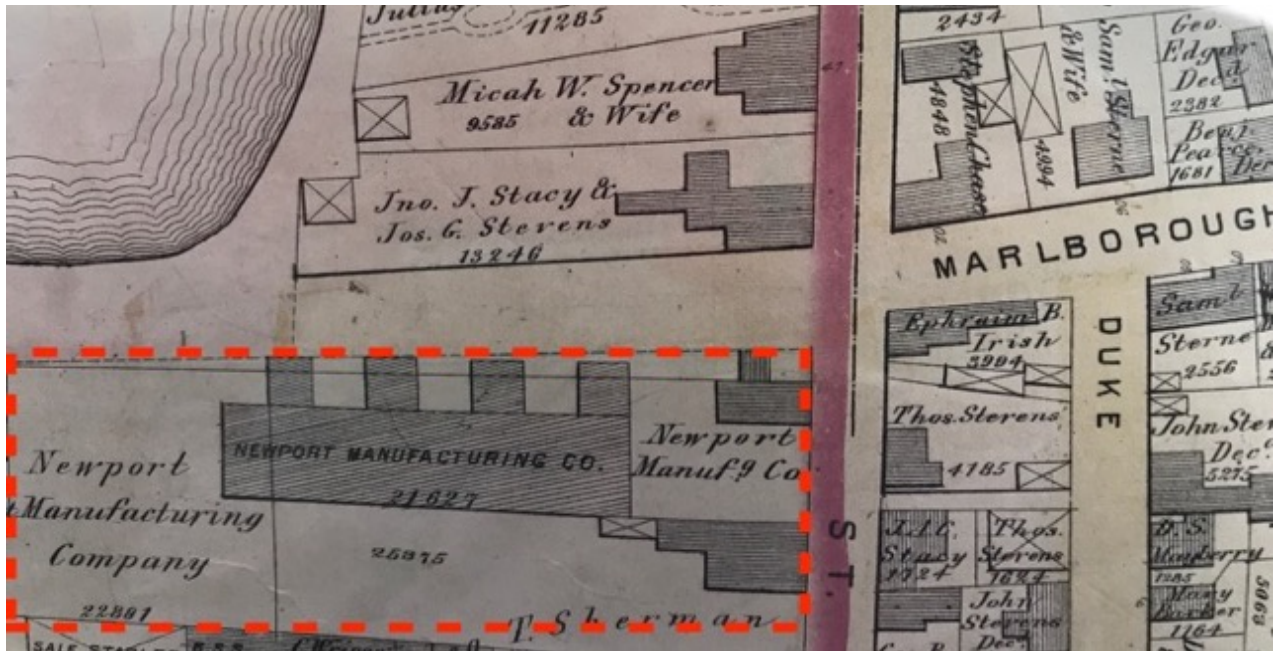


Figure 40: Detail from the 1876 City Atlas of Newport. Showing the location of the Newport Manufacturing Company on West Marlborough Street.



Figure 41: Aerial View of West Marlborough Street today showing location of the Shops at Long Wharf. Courtesy of Google Maps.



Figure 42: View of the Shops at Long Wharf from Marlborough Street. Constructed in the late twentieth century. Shops are located alongside Thames and its parking lot sits directly on Marlborough, where the Newport Manufacturing Company Building once stood. Photographed by: Arianna Marchetti, 11 Jan. 2018

As mentioned in chapter one, Cardines Field is one of the most notable sites found on America's Cup Avenue (Figures 44, and 45). The field serves as an important landmark to both the city of Newport and the country because it is the oldest baseball field in the United States. The site was first established for baseball use in 1908 and was later purchased by the city in 1936, when it underwent a major transformation that constructed it into a stadium.¹⁴⁷ It was in danger of demolition during the 1980s when parking space was needed for Newport's rising number of tourists during the summer months. Luckily funds were raised by the city to prevent it from being demolished and assisted in providing it with the necessary repairs it had needed after experiencing years of neglect. Today, the field is home to the Newport Gulls who are very popular locally and still actively play here during the Spring and summer months.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷"Newport Gulls," NECBL, 2019, accessed April 3 2019, <http://newportgulls.pointstreaksites.com/view/newportgulls/cardines-field>.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.



Figure 44: View of Cardines Field from West Marlborough Street. Photographed by: Arianna Marchetti, 11 Jan. 2018



Figure 45: The Newport Gulls playing at Cardines Field. Photo Courtesy of WhatsUpNewp

With the help of organizations such as the Preservation Society of Newport County and the Newport Restoration Foundation that were established in the twentieth century, several of Marlborough Street's structures have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places, which have brought much attention to its many layers in the landscape. According to the National Register of Historic Places registration form for the Newport National Historic Landmark District, a total of eight lots on Marlborough Street are listed.¹⁴⁹ These properties include: a 1921 gas station, St. Paul's Methodist Church (circa 1806), The John Coddington House (circa 1725), The Samuel Stern House (circa 1848), The Benjamin Pearce House (circa 1800), The Newport County Jail (circa 1722), the A.T. Lawton Building (circa 1870), and The Great Friends Meeting House (circa 1699).¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ "National Register of Historic Places Registration Form: Newport National Historic Landmark District," *United States Department of the Interior: National Park Service*, 1995, <http://cityofnewport.com/home/showdocument?id=7240>.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

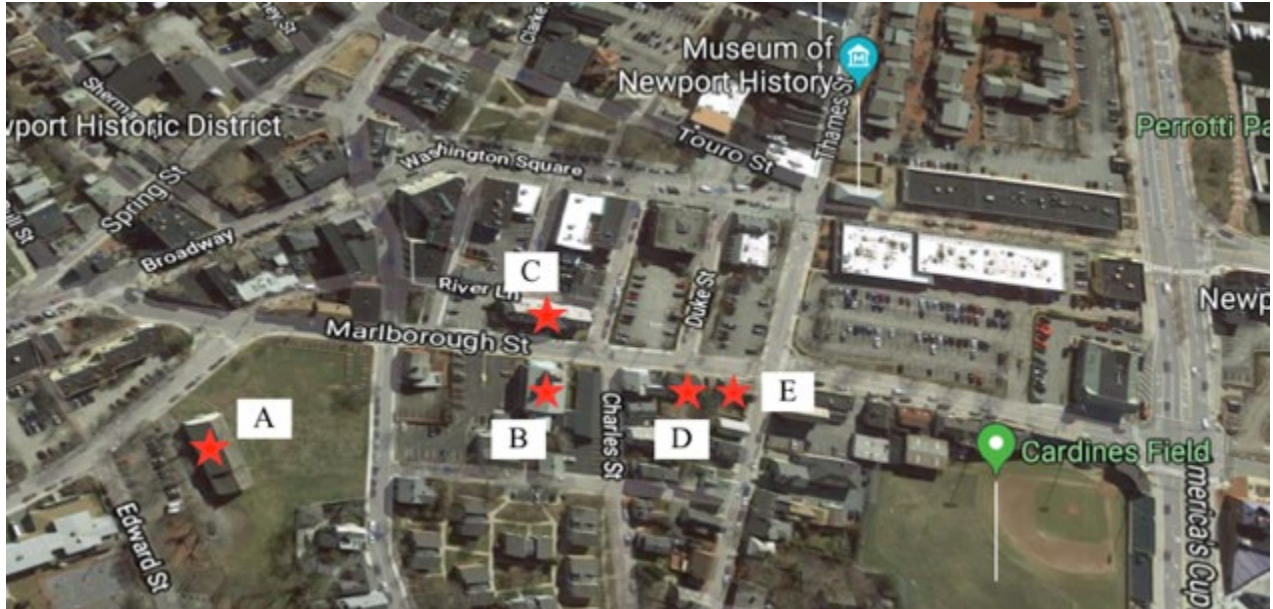


Figure 46: Map depicting existing structures on Marlborough Street that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Map Courtesy of Google Maps.

- A. The Great Friends Meeting House
- B. St. Paul's Methodist Church
- C. The Jailhouse Inn
- D. Judge Samuel Stern House
- E. John Coddington House

The most notable change made to the Street from the latter half of the twentieth century is the amount of vacant lots, neglect to some historic structures, and twentieth century infill.

Former densely compacted buildings have been replaced with parking lots that house cars for businesses or apartments on the street or for businesses located on the adjacent side streets such as Thames Street and Washington Square (i.e. Citizen's Bank and the Shops at Long Wharf) (Figure 47).



Figure 47: Map showing location of parking lots on West Marlborough and Marlborough Street today. Courtesy of Google Maps.

In terms of neglect to historic structures, much of the character that once existed on the street has been diminished due to poor maintenance and some replaced with early twentieth-century mixed use structures that have been altered and modified over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first century. Most consist of businesses on the ground level floors and apartment spaces on the upper floors. These types of buildings tend to draw away from the historic resources that still exist. However, it can be argued that these twentieth century modifications bring historic character, showing evidence of cycles of investment on the street (Figures 49 and 50). While today, about 80 percent of Marlborough and West Marlborough Streets fall within Newport’s historic district (Figure 48), this was not always the case, allowing for great change in its physical appearance in the past.¹⁵¹ However, as mentioned previously, its most notable

¹⁵¹ “Historic District Map,” *City of Newport, RI: Historic District Commission*, 2018. <http://cityofnewport.com/home/showdocument?id=3526>.

historic buildings have experienced remarkable restorations thanks to the number of organizations developed within the city whose goals are to preserve these buildings for future appreciation.



Figure 48: Tax Assessor's Plat 17 Map of Newport showing areas of the city that are part of the historic district shaded in yellow. Courtesy of the city of Newport.



Figure 49: Neglected Historic Structures on the corner of Broadway and Marlborough Streets, standing next to modern commercial space (pictured on the right). Photographed by: Arianna Marchetti, 11 Jan. 2018.



Figure 50: Example of twentieth century mixed-use structure on West Marlborough Street. Photographed by: Arianna Marchetti, 11 Jan. 2018.

What Stories Can Marlborough Street Tell Us?

As noted in the RIHPHC's "West Broadway Neighborhood Report", Marlborough Street and its surrounding neighborhood was always a "modest" area of the city consisting of a combination of residential and commercial spaces.¹⁵² The street began with diverse groups of settlers beginning with the English as early as the seventeenth century. Those who came later continued to build on to the landscape, transforming it into the unique landscape of diverse architectural styles and attractions it is today.¹⁵³

Marlborough Street may not have held the title for having a vibrant history associated with wealthy residents as Bellevue Avenue or Thames Street did, but it does tell its own story – one that may be overlooked due to its association with residents of lower social status. When looking at Marlborough Street from a different perspective, each building on the street tells its own unique story. With construction dates as early as the seventeenth century up until twenty first century construction, the buildings on Marlborough Street can communicate with centuries of history, which makes the street as unique as it is today. The diversity of architectural styles and construction dates is readily evident and in fact, educational to both the community and Newport tourists. The streetscape provides a series of layers and themes that contribute to how it is perceived today. To keep its history alive and recognized, many efforts must be implemented.

Promoting and revitalizing Marlborough Street might be much easier if property owners had preserved more historical resources from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the entire street had been included in Newport's Historic District. However, the later additions and alterations to historic buildings add character to the landscape, provide less expensive rental space in Newport's downtown, and can tell equally important stories about the street. An

¹⁵² Ibid, 3.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 5-31.

example of this can be seen in the three images below showing number 2-10 Marlborough Street (Figure 51).



Figure 51: Numbers 2, 6, and 10 Marlborough Street. Photo Courtesy of Google Maps.

The building on the far right of the photograph above is a large structure that has been altered over time and includes commercial space (tailor shop) on the first floor and residential spaces on the upper floors, much like many other buildings on Marlborough Street today. To the left of that building sit the Judge Samuel Stern House (1848) and the John Coddington House (1725). Both are obviously historical in their appearances and have been well preserved and maintained. Ten Marlborough Street, located on the far right, seems out of place due to its large mass in comparison to the other two structures and its newly adapted features. It is easy to make this judgement, because at one time, there may have been a structure that stood much more harmoniously with its neighbors. However, by looking at this building and focusing on the fact that it does not “fit in” with the two it stands next to, layers of history are being ignored. This means that if 10 Marlborough Street had not been altered several times since its original

construction in 1800, it would be difficult to tell how those who have settled on the street throughout time, had made an impact on the built environment through trends like multifamily housing and mixed-use commercial and residential spaces.

The Judge Samuel Stern House and the John Coddington House are examples of two historic homes that represent two important figures in Newport's history. These homes can be appreciated for both that association and because they provide evidence as to what typical homes looked like in given time periods. On the other hand, 10 Marlborough Street, shows demand for a new type of architecture as the city expanded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁵⁴

Conclusion

It is evident through the research done for this chapter, that Marlborough Street is a complex, layered, cultural landscape. While there are many clear examples of how the physical setting of Marlborough Street has negatively changed over time, positive aspects have developed as well, mainly to pertain to the needs of modern-day society. By making these connections between past and present, much can be learned about just how much of Marlborough Street can relate to its past, even if it is not noticeable at first glance (Figures 52 and 53).

¹⁵⁴ "Historic Houses-John Coddington House." *The Newport Restoration Foundation*. 2009-2018. https://www.newportrestoration.org/preservation/historic_houses/details/3-john_coddington.



Figure 52: John Collins, Lithograph of Historic Quaker Meeting at the Great Friends Meeting House. Circa 1800s. Courtesy of the Newport Historical Society.



Figure 53: Craft Beer Festival being held at The Great Friends Meeting House. Photo courtesy of Rhode Island Monthly.

Chapter 3: Analysis for Reactivation

Introduction

This chapter evaluates the existing cultural landscape of Marlborough Street within the context of state and local preservation planning to suggest ways to revitalize the street and better integrate it into the surrounding urban fabric. Planning context is provided by two reports: the 1977 RIHPHC report and the Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan. The RIHPHC makes recommendations regarding preservation planning for Marlborough Street and its surrounding neighborhood. It focuses a large portion of its content on outlining basic goals and objectives to improve the area's physical state for the future.¹⁵⁵ The purpose for providing these recommendations in the RIHPHC report was to influence both local officials and the general community to take action in creating a conservation program for the West Broadway Neighborhood that would make it a more a more enjoyable place to live and visit in the future. This report offers some recommendations that have been partially implemented by preservation organizations and the public since this time. However, there are still others that require attention. With some similar goals in mind, The Newport Planning Department wrote the Comprehensive Land Use Plan in 2017 to promote ways in which Newport can be improved for the future through community involvement, preservation, and sustainability. It also provides a list of implementation actions that can support future planning efforts for Marlborough Street.¹⁵⁶ This chapter will review and update the recommendations of these reports and suggest a Street Beautification Program that plans to better the future of the street if executed. This type of program focuses on improving the overall character of a street by restoring building facades,

¹⁵⁵ "The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report."

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 10-13.

repairing streets and sidewalks, and enforcing matters such as a sign ordinance that prevents businesses from using unattractive signage that may obstruct the view of the street.¹⁵⁷

Planning Context

Proposed plans for reactivation and reintegration of Marlborough Street into the historic area of Newport are guided by the vision statement presented in the Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan.¹⁵⁸ The plan vision statement describes an ideal version of what Newport will look like in the upcoming future¹⁵⁹ The statement reads:

We are committed to charting a course for our future that embraces and encourages innovative growth and development, taking an active role in the stewardship of our architectural and natural resources, and an enhanced quality of life, all while we maintain our unique historic and cultural assets that are the foundation of our character.¹⁶⁰

The city makes not only the well-being of its citizens and visitors a priority, but also has goals for the future of the physical characteristics that have shaped Newport into the unique and history-rich city that it is today. Emphasis on preserving the past is mentioned frequently throughout the land use plan as a means of fulfilling the vision.

Recommendations

The RIHPHC report made five major recommendations for preservation and rehabilitation of Marlborough Street and its environs (See Table 1). Although this report was written decades ago, many of its recommendations are still relevant and have not yet been implemented, to help revive Marlborough Street and its neighboring streets (Figure 54).

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 25.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 1-6.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 1-6.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, 1-6.

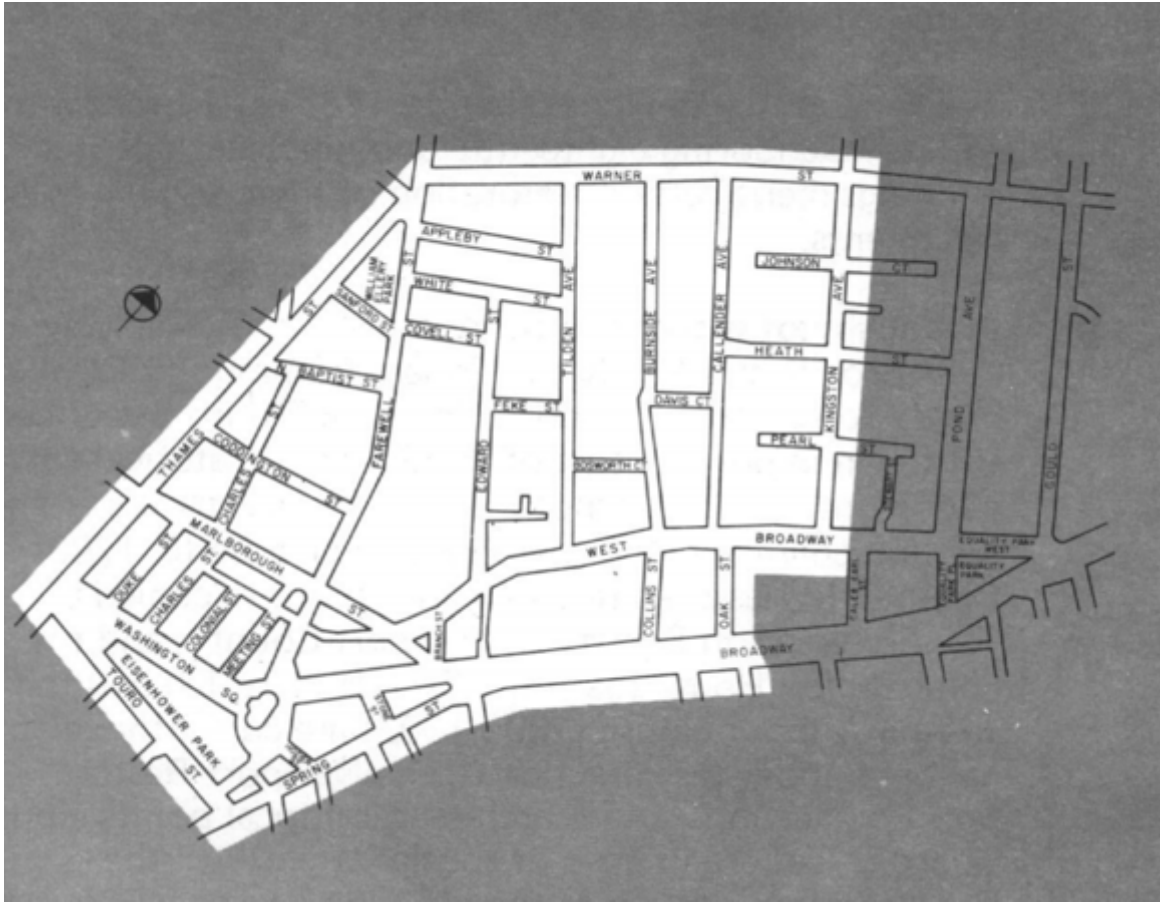


Figure 54: Map showing the West Broadway Neighborhood. Courtesy of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1977.

Table 1: Recommendations for the Future Improvement of Marlborough Street

<p>Recommendation One – <i>Protecting the Heritage of the Neighborhood</i></p>	<p>“To provide for the protection of the heritage of the West Broadway Neighborhood, including its important buildings, residential areas, commercial districts, streetscapes and open spaces.”¹⁶¹</p>
<p>Recommendation Two - <i>Re-establishing and Maintaining the Identity of the Neighborhood</i></p>	<p>“To re-establish and maintain historical and environmental identity of the West Broadway Neighborhood’s residential areas and commercial districts as a goal of new planning efforts.”¹⁶²</p>
<p>Recommendation Three - <i>Upgrading the Image of the Neighborhood</i></p>	<p>“To upgrade the image of the West Broadway residential area, encourage pride in the community’s heritage and involve local preservation and historical groups, libraries, the Newport School Department, The Rhode Island Black Heritage Society, the Office of the Mayor and all interested organizations in the implementation of neighborhood conservation program.”¹⁶³</p>
<p>Recommendation Four - <i>“Encouraging Private Restoration and Rehabilitation Activities”</i></p>	<p>“Seek creative restoration and rehabilitation incentives such as real-estate tax relief and a temporary freeze on assessments; and make citizens aware of home improvements which will not affect a property’s tax assessment.”¹⁶⁴</p>
<p>Recommendation Five - <i>“Initiating a Street Improvement and Beautification Program”</i></p>	<p>“Initiate a street improvement-and-beautification program consisting of appropriate attractive signs, lighting, planting, paving materials and street furniture as a means of enhancing neighborhood rehabilitation efforts.”¹⁶⁵</p>

¹⁶¹ Ibid, 33.

¹⁶² Ibid, 33.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 34.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 34.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 35.

This study makes recommendations based on the recommendations in the West Broadway Neighborhood Report and adds additional context and an updated approach.

Protecting the Heritage of the Neighborhood (Recommendation 1)

To provide for the protection of the heritage of the West Broadway Neighborhood, including its important buildings, residential areas, commercial districts, streetscapes and open spaces.¹⁶⁶

This recommendation particularly pertains to protecting the heritage of the West Broadway Neighborhood in terms of its physical nature, being its landscape that has existed for centuries. This report pays close attention to two major implementation actions the RIHPHC suggests under this general recommendation being: the publicizing of historic resources and including Marlborough Street as part of Newport's Historic District.

Action: Publicizing Historic Resources

The RIHPHC places emphasis primarily on publicizing properties in the area that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. While there are many properties on Marlborough Street that are historically significant, only two are listed on the Register: The Great Friends Meeting House (1699) and the White Horse Tavern (1673).¹⁶⁷ As discussed previously in this study, both sites are have been beautifully restored and are properly maintained today. Both qualify as major tourist attractions because they are two of Newport's earliest surviving structures and are successful in drawing in visitors, especially during the summer months. The Great Friends Meeting House is still widely used for community events year around.¹⁶⁸ An example of this is shown in the photograph below. Here, a craft beer festival is being held on the spacious lawn, bringing together members of the community as well as

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 33.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. 33.

¹⁶⁸ Great Friends Meeting House," *The Newport Historical Society: History Starts Here*, 2018, <http://newporthistory.org/properties/great-friends-meeting-house/>.

tourists. The Newport Historical Society also uses the space to host other community events, usually throughout the summer months.¹⁶⁹ These public events are a positive way to bring members of the community together and educate them on the history of nearby resources. Most importantly, these events generate funds. This money funds if restoration projects in structures such as the Great Friends Meeting House and other properties that are maintained by historical organizations such as the Newport Historical Society.

While it is important to recognize these two buildings, other significant buildings on the street such as: prominent historic homes (the John Coddington House and the Samuel Stern House), the Jailhouse Inn, and the historic fire station should also be publicized. This can assist in bringing larger numbers of people into the area. The RIHPHC suggests that since attention had been brought to sites such as the Great Friends Meeting House and the White Horse Tavern, more restoration processes will be implemented in the area, which will assist in revitalizing the street.¹⁷⁰ Suggested ways to publicize historic buildings on the street could include setting up tours for the public and organizing more programs and events for the public through organizations such as the Newport Historical Society, the Museum of Newport History, or The Great Friends Meeting House (See Figure 53).

Action: Marlborough Street as a Part of the Newport Historic District

The current local historic district covers about 40 percent of the city of Newport and about 70 percent of Marlborough Street. The Historic District Commission (HDC) makes great efforts to preserve all the structures within the zone and does not approve on any demolition, unless deemed necessary.¹⁷¹ Luckily, most of Marlborough Street's most significant structures

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report," 33.

¹⁷¹ "Historic District Commission," *City of Newport, RI*. 2017, Web. 29 April 2019, <http://cityofnewport.com/departments/zoning-inspections/historic-district-commission>.

lie within the historic district, including: St. Paul's Methodist Church, The Newport Jailhouse, the Whitehorse Tavern, and the John Coddington House (Figure 55).

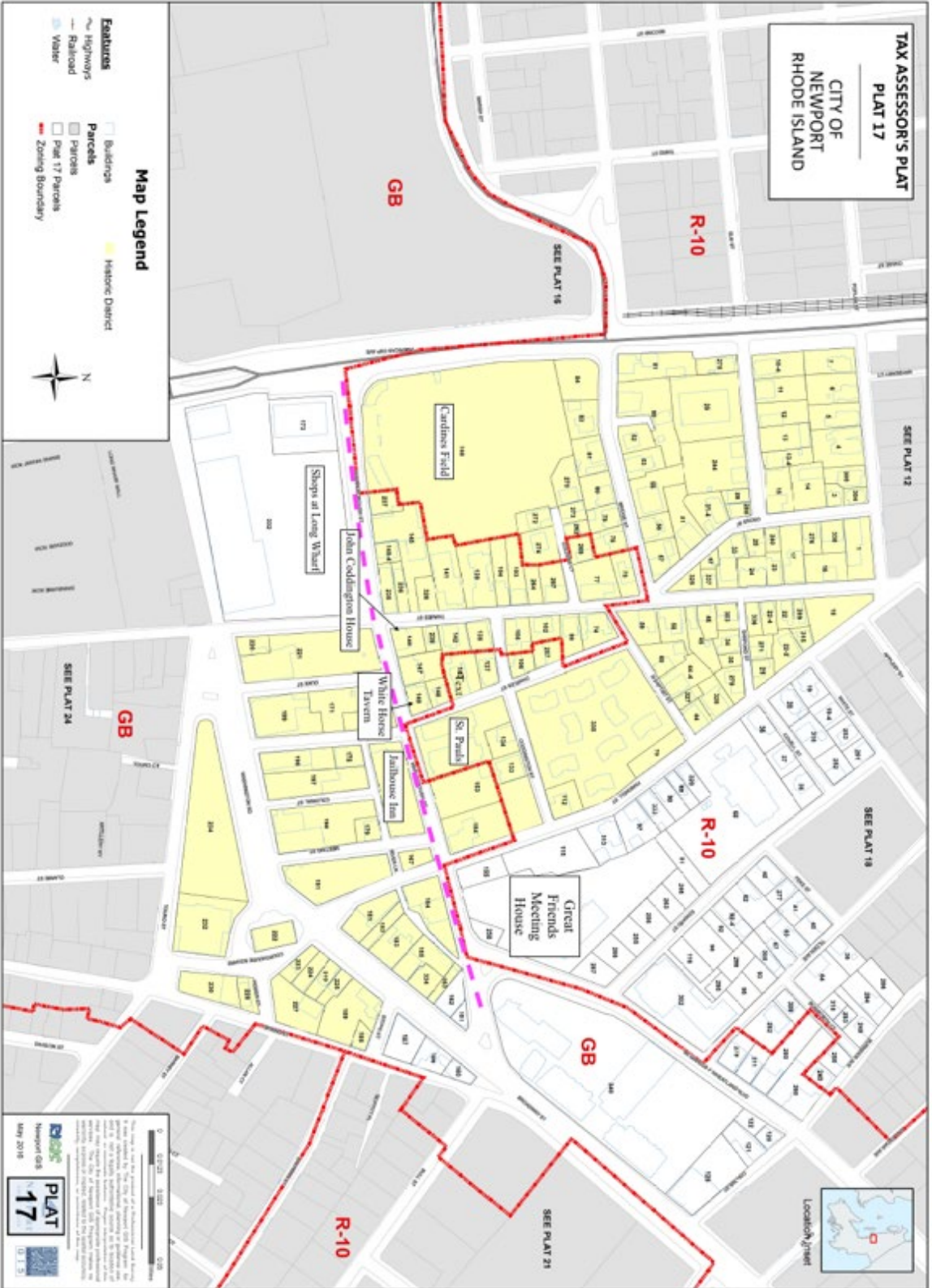


Figure 55: Tax Assessor's Plat 17 Map of Newport showing areas of the city that are part of the historic district shaded in yellow. Courtesy of the city of Newport.

The HDC was officially established in 1964 and most of Marlborough Street was protected from future neglect although it had already experienced years of demolition and oversight by this time. The recommendation of expanding the historic district was proposed several decades ago in the West Broadway Neighborhood Report, referenced in Chapters One and Two. It states under its recommendations for future actions to: “expand the local historic district, through the approval of the Newport City Council, so that it would include the entire West Broadway Neighborhood, thereby giving the Newport Historic District Commission responsibility for review of all major exterior alterations, demolition and new construction. This action would have a stabilizing effect on the historical environment.”¹⁷² It is interesting to note that this report was constructed roughly forty years ago, and these changes still have not been made. The question remains today as to whether expanding the historic district is feasible and desirable by the city.

Public and private disinvestment in terms of neglect and a great deal of demolition prior to the establishment of the Historic District influenced the later district boundaries. Many of the properties on the street were not deemed significant enough to preserve or restore by the city prior to 1964, leading to much of the street being replaced with newer construction and vacant lots now used for parking. Despite this, Marlborough Streets history is as rich as any other neighborhood of Newport, dating back to 1654, a time in which much of the other historic district regions in the city were not even established yet.

¹⁷² Ibid, 33.

Re-establishing and Maintaining the Identity of the Neighborhood (Recommendation 2)

To re-establish and maintain historical and environmental identity of the West Broadway Neighborhood's residential areas and commercial districts as a goal of new planning efforts.¹⁷³

Here, the RIHPHC strongly suggests the idea of new uses for both commercial and residential buildings. Specifically, they recommend “the conversion of eighteenth and nineteenth century houses into professional offices.”¹⁷⁴ While this has been implemented in some of the homes from this era, perhaps further renovation projects can be conducted to provide more appropriate uses for some of the poorly maintained multi-family houses that still serve as residences today. Although, rather than converting these to office spaces (as suggested by the RIHPHC), perhaps a more appropriate reuse idea would be for small businesses that attract both locals and tourists, or renting the spaces out through the busy summer months. These changes have the potential to make a major impact on the way Marlborough Street is viewed by the public, by creating more means of enjoyment, primarily for tourists.

Upgrading the Image of the Neighborhood (Recommendation 3)

To upgrade the image of the West Broadway residential area, encourage pride in the community's heritage and involve local preservation and historical groups, libraries, the Newport School Department, The Rhode Island Black Heritage Society, the Office of the Mayor and all interested organizations in the implementation of neighborhood conservation program.¹⁷⁵

This recommendation as suggested by the RIHPHC brings up a very important point that could help the history of the West Broadway Neighborhood to be further recognized in the future. They suggest: “To mount a series of history exhibits consisting of old views and artifacts associated with local historic events, sites, building and industries” as an implementation action

¹⁷³ Ibid, 33.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 34.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 34.

for the overall goal.¹⁷⁶ By incorporating simple elements like this on the street or outside of historic landmarks on Marlborough, the public can be taught a little bit more about its history through photographs, maps, small passages, and more. Along with this, the RIHPHC also recommends the incorporation of walking tours for the neighborhood and providing insight in terms of revitalization projects to the public through media.¹⁷⁷ This has the potential to be even more successful today with the number of social media platforms that exist. There are currently several guided tours in Newport, mainly via trolleys and pedicabs. Most these are based in the Ocean drive area, showing tourists the Newport Mansions.¹⁷⁸ The Newport Food Tour directs visitors to the White Horse Tavern which brings some attention to the area, however, is not focused specifically on its other resources.¹⁷⁹

“Encouraging Private Restoration and Rehabilitation Activities” (Recommendation 4)

The RIHPHC strongly advocates for private rehabilitation and restoration action by suggesting that rather than demolishing the much-neglected nineteenth and twentieth century tenement housing in the area, to instead restore and rehabilitate them for housing new families (Figure 56).¹⁸⁰ It is suggested that this be done for the appreciation of the evolving history of the street. Although these structures need repair and maintenance today, they have the space to house two to three units each. Therefore, it is proposed that property owners take the initiative to rehabilitate these structures, restoring the elements on the exteriors so that they concur with the other existing historical structures on the street. With the repair of the interiors, these structures could attract more future buyers or renters. The RIHPHC suggests several ways in which property

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 34.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 34.

¹⁷⁸ “Newport Top Tours and Activities,” *Viator: A trip Advisor Company*, 2019, Web. 2 June 2019, <https://www.viator.com/Newport-tourism/Newport-Top-Tours-and-Activities>.

¹⁷⁹ “Newport Neighborhood Food Tour,” *Rhode Island Red Food Tours*, 2019, Web. 2 June 2019, <https://www.rhodeislandredfoodtours.com/tours/newport/>.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid,34.

owners can achieve this. They recommend that property owners take advantage of rehabilitation and restoration incentives that provide tax relief and specifically consult the Tax Reform Act of 1976. They also hope to make these individuals aware of repair projects that will not affect tax assessments on their properties such as masonry repairs, roof repairs, interior repairs, and landscaping. Lastly, the RIHPIC suggests the development of workshops for property owners that can allow them to work with local preservation organizations and agencies to create community-based restoration projects.¹⁸¹



Figure 56: Late 18th-early 19th century structures on Marlborough Street today, in need of rehabilitation. Photo taken by: Arianna Marchetti, 11 Jan. 2018.

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 34.

“Initiating a Street Improvement and Beautification Program” (Recommendation 5)

Initiate a street improvement-and-beautification program consisting of appropriate attractive signs, lighting, planting, paving materials and street furniture as a means of enhancing neighborhood rehabilitation efforts.¹⁸²

Branching off the suggestion for future planning efforts, is the idea of a street beautification program, which is suggested by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission in their report. With this effort comes suggestions for elements such as attractive and historically referenced signage for both automobile and foot traffic as well as on commercial buildings for businesses. Another suggestion is to enhance the landscaping by adding more flowers or even small bushes and trees. The addition of public benches in small open spaces could allow for people to relax and enjoy what Marlborough should offer in terms of its historical elements.

With this, the RIHPHC’s report suggests five specifications that have the potential to beautify the area. The first of these suggestions is “to promote facade restoration within the commercial districts, paying particular attention to original surface materials, color, the relationship of windows and doors, and special architectural detailing.”¹⁸³ These exterior improvements can be very effective when trying to attract more visitors, and would likely bring more foot traffic toward the Marlborough Street area. Although the mix of modern and historic buildings might cause an issue with this, it is recommended that future storefronts on the modern structures develop exteriors that relate in kind to their neighboring historic buildings.

The next suggestion to assist in beautifying the neighborhood is to “enforce strictly the city’s sign ordinance to eliminate intrusive, over-scaled, or inappropriate signs and graphics.”¹⁸⁴

¹⁸² Ibid, 35.

¹⁸³ Ibid, 35.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 35.

While this may be a small element in the scheme of things, signage can greatly affect the way a landscape is portrayed. With the incorporation of increased amounts of large and modern signage in a historic area, its historic integrity can be masked and over-looked.

Action: Parking Lots

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the amount of demolition that occurred in the Marlborough Street area during the latter half of the twentieth century resulted in vacant spaces that were filled with parking lots rather than new construction (Figure 57). The RIHPHC acknowledges the issue of parking lots in their report by saying “undertake a professional study of neighborhood traffic problems so that proposed parking lots will not detract from the overall character of the streetscape.” Unfortunately, since the 1970s, this suggestion was not taken into full consideration, resulting in three large parking lots existing on the street today, serving commercial spaces on Washington Square and Thames Street. The report does not propose that any of the parking lots on Marlborough be infilled for new construction, primarily because they have become crucial to businesses in the downtown today.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 34.

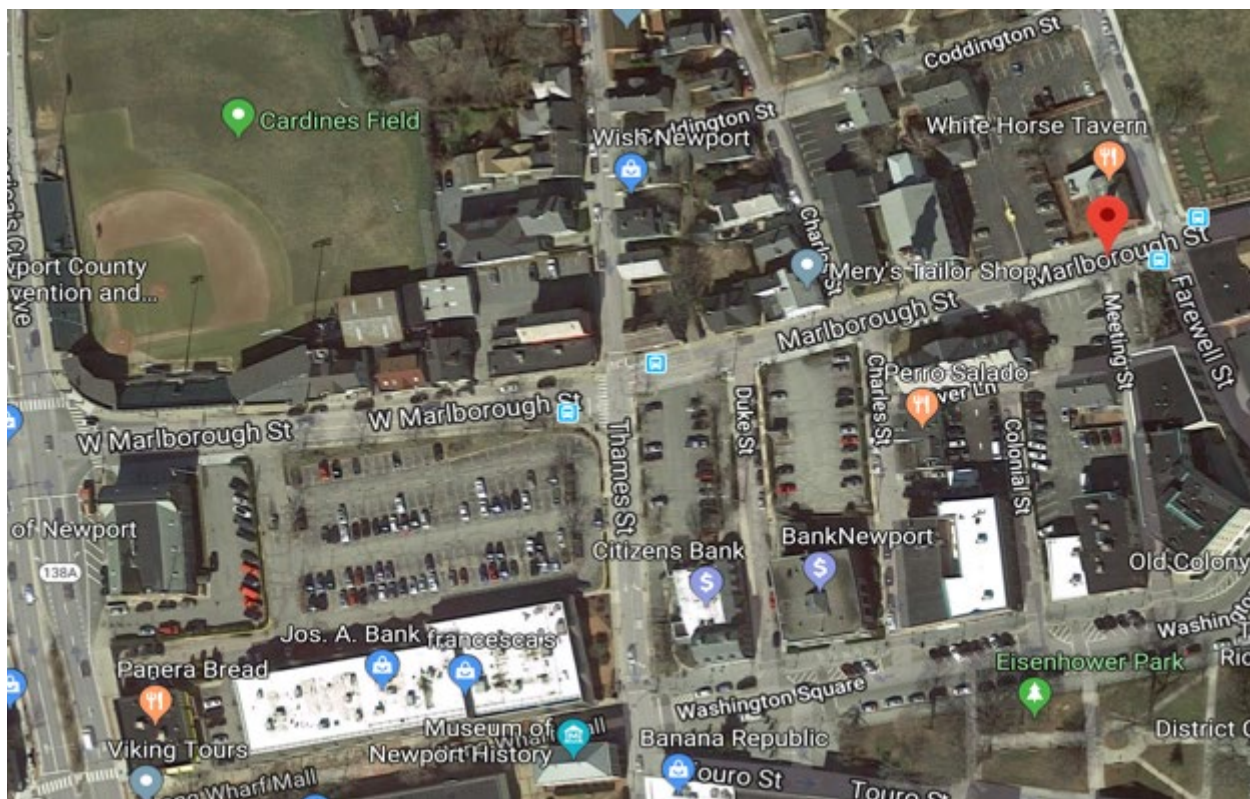


Figure 57: Map depicting three existing parking lots on West Marlborough and Marlborough Streets. Photo courtesy of Google Maps.

Action: Securing Funds

Continue to secure funding for plans, programs, and projects affecting historical and cultural sites.¹⁸⁶

In the 2017 Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan, the Newport Planning Department states a major goal relevant to the future of Marlborough Street to ensure that funds are put aside to promote and protect historical resources. This money can create programs such as walking tours and information sessions that address the history of Marlborough Street. It can also go toward maintaining the historical structures themselves, so that there is never a situation where they are left to fall into disrepair again. Although there are several ways in which Marlborough

¹⁸⁶ “City of Newport Comprehensive Land Use Plan,” 10-13.

Street can be improved for the future, much of the suggested recommendations would not be possible without city funding.¹⁸⁷

Summary

Since the West Broadway neighborhood report was written in the 1970s, it is evident that some of these efforts have been implemented but there is still work to do, especially regarding Marlborough Street. These suggestions for further planning efforts are not just speaking to the streets' physical context, but its overall feel as a historic environment. By acknowledging more of its historic assets and shifting some of the commercial uses to better accommodate the public, the street has better potential for success as a flourishing part of the city. The White Horse Tavern and Jailhouse Inn currently serve as excellent examples of local preservation efforts to remind people of Marlborough's history, by providing an eighteenth century feel to their visitors.¹⁸⁸ The inn makes similar efforts by maintaining the historic elements of the Jailhouse that remain, allowing customers to have a unique experience.¹⁸⁹ This particular reuse was an overall success for the area, particularly because its previous use as the police headquarters was seen as "inadequate", according to the report.¹⁹⁰ While these small scale efforts to retain Marlborough's historical context are successful in their own right, it is suggested that these adaptive reuse efforts expand beyond a few individual sites, so that a passerby or tourist can just walk through and experience a sense of history, without having to actually enter into a space. For positive planning efforts, the report also suggests: "the revitalization of commercial enterprises" and that the "design of new commercial structures should reflect a sensitivity to historic

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 10-13.

¹⁸⁸ "History - The White Horse Tavern," *The White Horse Tavern*, 2018.

<http://whitehorsenewport.com/about/history/>.

¹⁸⁹ "Our Story," *The Jailhouse Inn*, 2018, Web. 13 April 2018, <http://jailhouse.com>.

¹⁹⁰ "The West Broadway Neighborhood: Newport Rhode Island: Statewide Historical Preservation Report," 34.

buildings along Broadway and its subsidiary streets.”¹⁹¹ While this suggestion seems to have been implemented on Broadway, Marlborough Street lacks in keeping its storefronts sensitive to its historic character (Figure 58). By suggesting an overall façade improvement in small businesses on the street, it can assist in allowing tourists and locals to be drawn to the area and appreciate it for its appreciation and acknowledgment of its past as mixed residential and commercial district. These types of changes will also require community involvement and the help of local historical organizations.



Figure 58: Modern storefronts on Marlborough Street today. Photographed by: Arianna Marchetti, 11 Jan. 2018.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

Conclusion

Each of these small recommendations as suggested, can create a major impact to its Marlborough Streets' historic resources, how the street is perceived by the public, and ability to influence local property owners to invest more in their properties. The goal is that these suggestions will be taken into consideration by those who read this report and that the history discussed in Chapter One can draw in more interest about its unique evolution. The goal of this report is to influence these property owners as well as city planners and architects to act in the future. Marlborough Street itself does not require a great deal of construction or extremely costly changes to bring attention to it. This can be achieved through city planning efforts and public and private investments to its buildings and landscapes.

Luckily, many of Marlborough Streets' resources are already in existence, but are not given the proper investments and used to their fullest potential. The lack of familiarity toward the street causes businesses and historical resources to be pushed out of the public eye. Marlborough Streets location sits so closely to the booming historic business district of the downtown, meaning that with proper investment in its resources, it can become integrated into this district. Perhaps sometime soon, it will truly become both a highly desirable place to live due to its number of businesses and sites to accommodate everyday life, as well as one of Newport's desirable tourist destinations.

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