

1. WATER MILL HAMLET CENTER: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

1.1 Hamlet Center Character

The Water Mill Hamlet Center is the local shopping area and institutional center for the Water Mill hamlet and surrounding residential areas. It is located along Montauk Highway at the historic core of the hamlet, and contains a variety of shops, services and community facilities:

- public open space and historic buildings such as the hamlet green, windmill, community center, and nearby museum;
- service facilities such as the USPS post office;
- shops, restaurants, office space, and other retail/commercial, located both in clustered development parcels and in various renovated houses and individual buildings;
- incidental residential development scattered among the above.

These uses, described in more detail in later sections of this report, respond to primarily local needs. Within the context of the larger Town area, regional needs such as supermarkets or other large scale retail shopping take place in the more substantial centers of neighboring Bridgehampton and Southampton Village or as highway commercial nodes.

1.2 Hamlet Center Heritage

Following a pattern found in many early farming communities, Water Mill's business district was directly linked to its mills. James Corwith built a general store across from his windmill in 1840 and the Benedicts built one across from their water mill. Around Corwith's store, the post office and additional businesses were established. The arrival of the railroad in 1870 led to commercial development around Deerfield Road, along which some of the old produce warehouses have been converted into tradesmen's buildings. The Water Mill Railroad station, an historic 'Italian villa' style, was built in 1903 and its form is basically intact. The Water Mill cemetery was created by the Town in 1729 and the adjacent Community House was built in 1897, originally as a non-denominational chapel. The old stagecoach tavern, built in the mid 1800s, today serves as a restaurant. The hamlet center has been commercial for several hundred years and a variety of building types, ages and styles reflect its history

Community institutions have grown up to preserve and sustain these historic treasures—the Water Mill Community Club, for instance, not only maintains important open space for recreational activity, but oversees the Community House. The Water Mill Village Improvement Association maintains the Village Green and 1800 Corwith Windmill, and another community

organization maintains and keeps in good repair the water-powered grist mill that named the hamlet and is now the Water Mill Museum. Water Mill Watch, a volunteer organization, and the Water Mill Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) act as watchdogs regarding larger scale planning and development issues.

The following is a summary of specific properties that help define the historic character of Water Mill. Information provided by the Town of Southampton Landmarks & Historic Districts Board. Authority comes from that Board and as noted from the following resources:

- * Listed in *Cultural Resources survey of the Town of Southampton*, July 2000 report prepared by GAI Consultants.
- ** Cited as an historic resource in *Water Mill Celebrating Community, the History of a Long Island Hamlet*, 1996
- √ Listed in the *National Register of Historic Places* by the US Department of the Interior and in the *NYS Register of Historic Places* by the NYS Parks Department's Division for Historic Preservation, 1978

Properties that help define the historic character of Water Mill

(string of numbers represents Suffolk County tax map number):

South Side of Montauk Highway

- 1 900-114-3-1:
*Village Green, Corwith Windmill and Veterans Memorial** ** √ The Green was originally part of a common grazing land in the late 1600s. Corwith purchased some of the land in 1813 and moved his windmill to the site. The Memorial area was first established in 1950..
- 2 731 Montauk Highway, 900-114-3-2
*Water Mill Cemetery** **, established 1729.
3. 743 Montauk Highway, 900-114-3-3
*Water Mill Community House**, ** built in 1895-87 as a non-denominational chapel. In the 1920s, religious services ended—but the building has continued to be used as community meeting hall.
4. 755 Montauk Highway, 900-114-3-8
*The Half-Way House** **—former tavern and stagecoach shop. Current use as restaurant. Dates to mid 1800s.
5. 773 Montauk Highway, 900-114-3-9
Former *Thomas H. Warren Sr, house*** , built in 1929. Currently an office for Warren's Garden Center. Excellent example of the Craftsman's bungalow style of architecture popular in 1920s

North Side of Montauk Highway.

6. 688 Montauk Highway, 900-114-1-31
Retail shops in original *Corwith general store building*,** built c. 1840.
7. 692 Montauk Highway, 900-114-1-33
Kitchen design business in *original Reiman Pharmacy building*** built late 1920s.
8. 696 Montauk Highway, 900-114-1-34
Penny Candy Shop in *original dress shop*** , built in 1920s.
9. 700 Montauk Highway, 900-114-1-35
Antiques shop in *original Ludlom house** **, built early 1800s.
10. 710 Montauk Highway, 900-114-1-39.2
Antiques shop in *renovated 1920s building***
11. 720 Montauk Highway, 900-114-1-40
Retail store in *former LeFebre home*** built in 1901.
12. 728 Montauk Highway, 900-114-1-41
Doctors offices in *former Parr Stationery store*** , built c 1910.
13. 50 Station Road, 900-114-1-52
*Water Mill Train Station** **, built in 1903.
Current use- restaurant.

Outside the boundary of the Village Center
but contributing to historic character of hamlet

14. 41 Old Mill Road, 900-114-2-8
*Water-powered grist mill** ** √ Currently a museum. Moved or constructed at site in 1700s.
15. 615 Montauk Highway, 900-114-3-24
Siena Spirituality Center at the *Villa Maria* * **. Building originally built in 1887 and extensively remodeled in 1910.
16. Some of the *building structures on Halsey Lane** ** are on the edge of the study area but they contribute to the visual image of the hamlet.
17. Some of the *building structures on Davids Lane** ** are on the edge of the study area but they contribute to the visual image of the hamlet

Based on the above, this report supports the recommendation of the 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update for a Water Mill Hamlet Heritage Area in the hamlet center in order to realize its historic architectural and cultural character.

