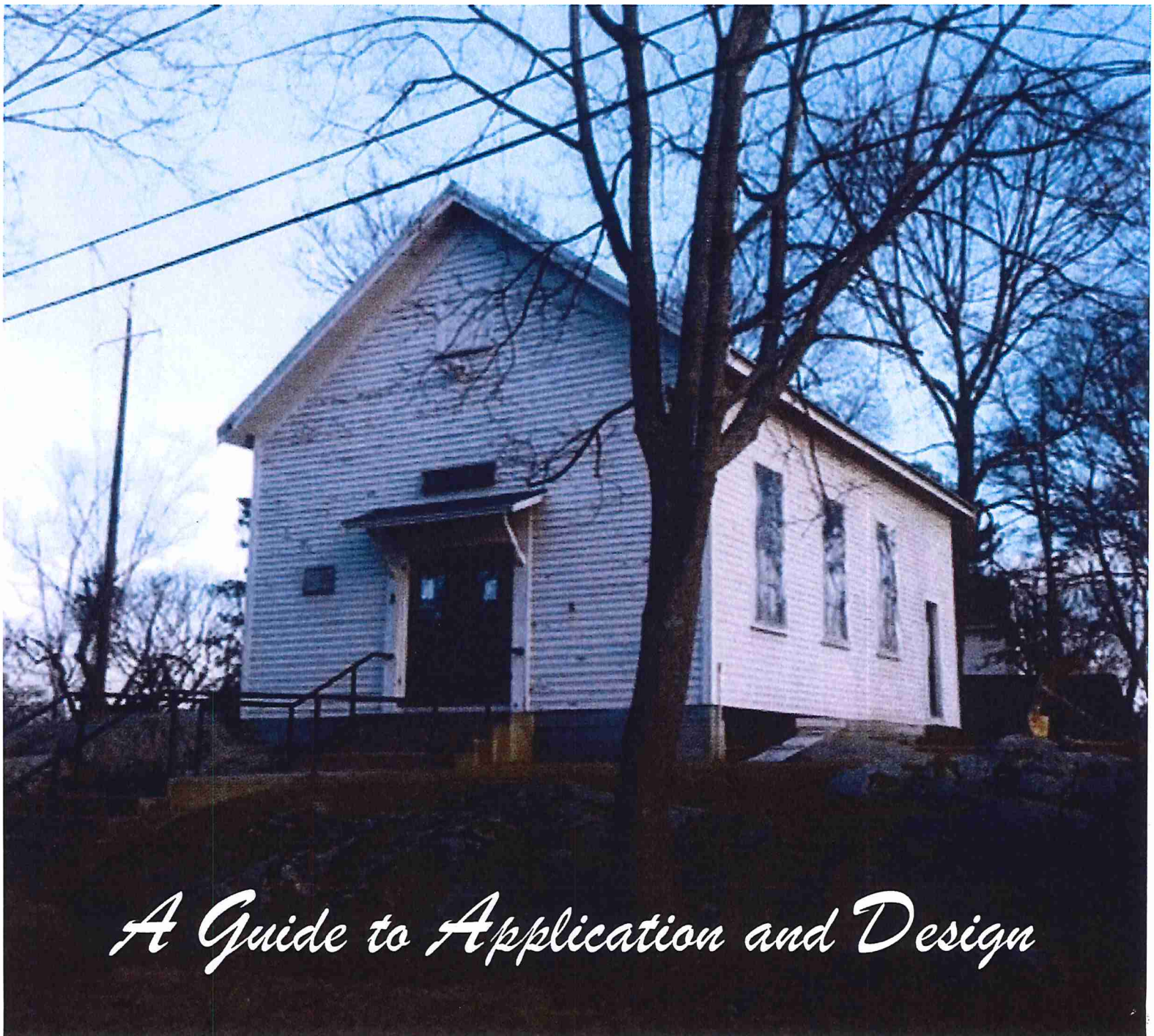


Ring's Island
Neighborhood Preservation District



A Guide to Application and Design

A Guide to the Process

The Ring's Island Neighborhood Preservation District Committee (NPDC) has prepared this guide for residents of Ring's Island, prospective residents, builders, architects and the general public. The guide explains the review process required for new construction, substantial additions and demolition in the Neighborhood Preservation District (NPD).

History of Ring's Island

Ring's Island, a part of the town of Salisbury, Massachusetts, is the most easterly in a series of eight small islands in the lower Merrimack River. Its forty acres of upland is surrounded by salt marsh and was historically cut off from the mainland by tidal creeks. The city of Newburyport lies on the opposite bank of the Merrimack. Salisbury Square is a mile to the north.

Today roads connect the island with the mainland and U.S. Route 1 leads to Newburyport and Salisbury Square, but when European settlement began in Salisbury in 1639, the island was reachable only by boat. It was an ideal place for a fishing station and in 1642 Robert Ring was granted six acres for that purpose. From a few houses near the ferry dock, the island grew into a small, maritime-based community with its own church and school at the center. Today Ring's Island is a dense residential community with many houses dating from the 17th to the 19th centuries and representing the predominant architectural styles of the time. Ring's Island's location, with views of the Merrimack and the salt marshes, its Town Pier, and narrow streets and lanes give the island a special character valued by residents and visitors.

In an effort to protect and preserve Ring's Island's special character, the Town of Salisbury enacted a local bylaw to establish the Ring's Island NPD. The district includes only properties on Ring's Island whose owners wished to be included when the bylaw was adopted. The district is administered by the Ring's Island NPD Committee.



Purpose

The bylaw's purpose is to:

- Preserve and protect the unique character and streetscape of the Ring's Island NPD, while recognizing that the neighborhood's character reflects an evolution from the 17th century and will inevitably continue to change.
- Limit the effects of demolition, incompatible new construction and substantial additions on the character and streetscape of the NPD.
- Review certain proposed alterations, which include demolition, new construction and substantial additions on any NPD property for appropriateness and compatibility with existing buildings, setting, streetscape and neighborhood character.
- Facilitate preservation of the neighborhood character and streetscape through a combination of binding and voluntary non-binding regulatory review.

Applicability

An NPD building is defined as a principal building on an NPD property or an accessory building on an NPD property that is part of the visible streetscape, i.e. visible from a public way and within 60' of same.

An NPD property is defined as any house lot that is identified in the NPD bylaw as part of the NPD, including any subdivision thereof.

Reviews

Review is required for :

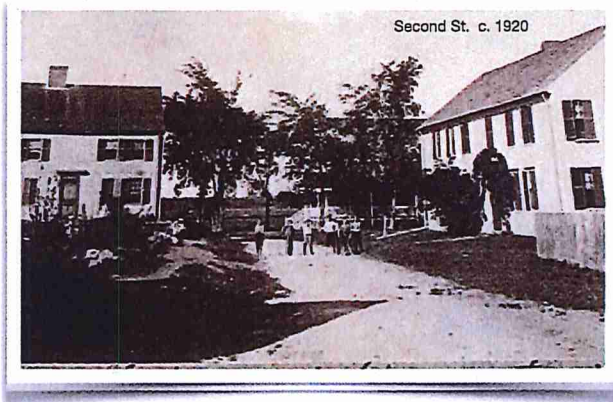
1. Demolition of 50% or more of an NPD building.
2. New construction on any NPD property.
3. A substantial addition to an NPD building that increases its floor space by more than 1,000 square feet or by more than 30%.



Exemptions

The following are exempt from the NPD review process.

- Any and all alterations on a property not included in the NPD. See NPD map on page 7.
- Routine maintenance.
- Repairs or improvements not requiring a building or demolition permit from the Salisbury building inspector.
- Temporary buildings, such as trailers, manufactured buildings, porta-potties, etc.
- Interior building alterations.
- Exterior alterations that do not increase the size of the building, including, for example:
 - Exterior building colors;
 - Installation of replacement windows, screens, storm windows and doors;
 - Removal or replacement of gutters; downspouts, and window and door shutters
 - Removal or replacement of siding and roofing of a building.
- Structures that are not buildings, or parts of buildings, such as fences, trellises, pergolas, yard ornaments, hardscape and other similar structures.
- Additions to a building that are not a substantial addition.
- Accessory buildings that are not part of the visible streetscape.
- Reconstruction of an NPD building damaged or destroyed by fire, storm or other disaster, provided that the reconstruction is completed in a manner that is consistent with other local bylaws. For an NPD property, the owner is encouraged to reconstruct the building, to the greatest extent possible, to conform to its original size and appearance.
- If the planned reconstructed building would increase the gross floor area of the original building either by more than 1,000 sq. ft. or by more than 30%, it is not exempt from the requirements of the bylaw, i.e. review is required.



Application and Review Process

There are two types of documents that the NPD Committee can issue: a Certificate to Alter and an Exemption Verification.

Certificate to Alter

As noted above, projects requiring binding review by the NPD Committee (NPDC), include demolition, new construction and substantial additions.

Applications are available on the NPDC webpage. The applicant completes the form, provides required submissions, and assembles materials into packets as directed on the form. These application packages then go to the NPDC chair or vice-chair for review. The goal of this initial review is only to see whether or not the application package is complete. If the application package is incomplete, then the chair or vice-chair notifies the applicant. A completed package is resubmitted.

Once a complete application package has been received, the NPDC chair or vice-chair submits it to the town clerk. The committee tries to complete initial reviews within three business days.

The NPDC then holds a public hearing on the application within 30 days of delivery of the completed application package to the town clerk. The applicant is contacted to schedule the hearing and abutters are notified by the NPDC secretary, using the address labels obtained by the applicant from the assessor's office.

After the hearing the NPDC determines whether or not the project is consistent with design standards set forth in the bylaw.

Within 20 days of the close of the public hearing, the NPDC submits a written determination to the applicant. A rationale for the the determination is included and explains how the project does or does not meet the design standards set forth in the bylaw. The determination, whether positive or negative is binding. If the project is approved, the NPDC issues a Certificate to Alter.



Exemption Verification

Projects that are exempt from review but require a building permit, such as interior construction or additions that are not substantial additions, need to be confirmed to be exempt. For these projects, the NPDC issues an Exemption Verification.

To obtain this exemption verification document, applicants download an exemption verification form from the NPD website, complete it and submit it to the NPDC. An informal review will then be conducted and a finding made. If exemption is verified, a signed Exemption Verification is issued.

Should the NPDC determine that a project is not exempt from review then the applicant moves on to file an application for a Certificate to Alter.

Binding and Advisory Reviews

Binding Review:

The process that evaluates whether or not to issue a Certificate to Alter is a binding review. After the NPDC receives a completed application, it will hold a public hearing on the proposal and will make a written determination within 20 days of the close of the hearing. The determination explains how the project does or does not meet the design standards in the NPD bylaw. If the project is approved, the NPDC issues a Certificate to Alter, subject to a 20-day appeal period.

Advisory Review:

An NPD property owner whose project is exempt, but who would like guidance in the design of the project, may request an advisory review. Advisory review is also available to Ring's Island property owners whose property is not in the NPD. These reviews are voluntary and non-binding. The goal of an advisory review is to recommend ways in which the planned alteration could be made more consistent with the design standards.



Review Focus

Each project undergoing binding review in the Ring's Island NPD will be evaluated using the standards in section 163-11 of the bylaw. These design standards are specific to the type of project being reviewed, namely demolition, substantial additions or new construction.

For demolition projects, the applicant specifies whether the project entails site renewal or new construction subsequent to the demolition. In the case of subsequent new construction, the review focuses on the new construction. Demolition will not be approved if the new construction is not approved. In the case of a post-demolition site renewal without new construction, the visible streetscape of the proposed renewal must be compatible with the immediate neighborhood.

For both new construction and substantial additions, the review focuses on the visible streetscape, which is defined as "any part of an NPD building that is visible from a public way and that is within 60 feet of a public way".

The review also focuses on the unique character and design of the neighboring buildings, which are defined as "NPD buildings and other buildings constructed prior to 1940 any part of whose lot is located within 300 feet of the NPD property."



New Construction - Design Guidelines

Where new construction is proposed, the design for the visible streetscape shall be compatible with the unique character and design of the neighboring buildings. The design shall preserve the existing spatial and visual qualities (height, proportion, relationship of structures and space, shape, scale) in the NPD, especially with respect to the neighboring buildings.

Ring's Island consists of a number of small "neighborhoods", each street with its own characteristics and streetscape. New buildings should exhibit a design that is in keeping with the neighboring buildings and the character of the streetscape and fit comfortably into the character of the NPD in general.

There is a rhythm to the various streetscapes and neighborhoods on Ring's Island. In order for a new home to contribute to this special character of its immediate neighborhood, and thus that of the NPD as a whole, it needs to fit in with that rhythm. To accomplish this, there should be consideration for the following;

SITE: Placement of new construction on the site should be compatible with neighboring buildings in terms of setback, spacing and distance from adjacent buildings.

CHARACTER: New construction should be designed so that the overall character of the site, topography, character-defining features and, to the extent possible, significant neighborhood vistas and views, are retained.

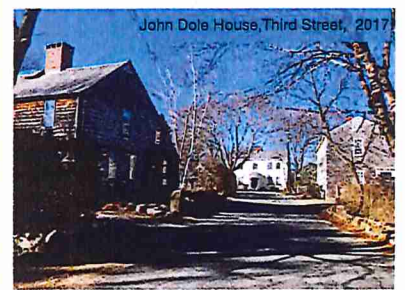
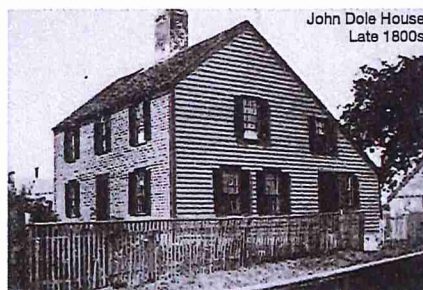
MATERIALS: Materials and finishes for new buildings should be compatible with materials found on neighboring buildings that contribute to the special character of the streetscape.

DESIGN: New construction should be architecturally compatible with neighboring buildings in terms of building height, proportion, shape, size, scale, massing, and roof shape.

- **Building Height** means the vertical distance from the lowest point of a structure at its front elevation at grade to the highest point of the structure, not including accessory fixtures attached to the structure, such as chimneys. The **height** of new construction in the NPD should be compatible with the neighboring buildings in the streetscape. Height should comply with Salisbury's zoning bylaws.
- **Proportion** refers to the proper and harmonious relation of one part to another or to the whole; for example, the way the windows and doors relate to one another on the building facade (void-solid relationship).
- **Scale** refers to the visual size of a structure when compared to adjacent structures and the site. The scale of new construction should be consistent with the width to height proportions of the neighboring buildings in the streetscape.
- **Massing** refers to the overall composition of the major exterior volumes of a building; i.e., the total of the geometrical forms or blocks of a structure. Both **scale** and **massing** determine the ability of a new construction project to fit in with its neighborhood environment. The specific components of a structure that combine to create its overall scale and massing includes height, design, materials, roof forms, foundation and foot-print.

WINDOWS AND DOORS: Windows and doors for proposed new buildings should be compatible in material, proportion, pattern and detail with the windows and doors of neighboring buildings that contribute to the special character of the neighborhood.

ROOF: Roof forms and pitches should be consistent with neighboring buildings.





Substantial Additions - Design Guidelines

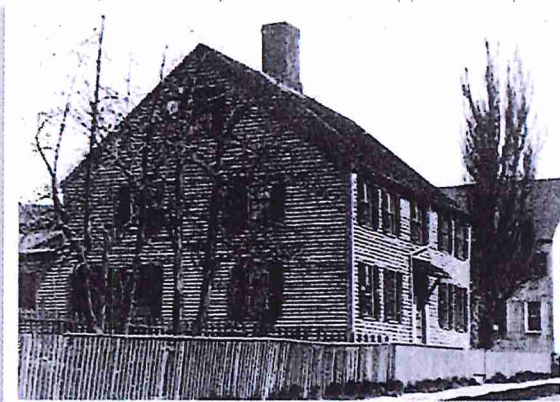
Binding review is restricted to the visible streetscape of the addition; portions of the addition that are not visible from a public way or within 60 feet of a public way are not reviewed.

- Compatible additions acknowledge and are sympathetic to the style of the original building and to the neighboring buildings and should use some of the characteristics of the original building such as simplicity of shape, pitched roofline, window details and spacing, materials etc.
- Additions should not overpower the original structure by size or scale or detract from the character of the original building or the neighboring buildings.
- Additions should not significantly change the proportion of built mass to open space on the individual site.

Accessory Buildings - Design Guidelines

Accessory buildings are detached buildings that customarily serve an incidental or subordinate use to that of the principal building. Accessory buildings include such things as storage sheds and detached garages.

In general, accessory structures within the visible streetscape shall be secondary in size and appearance to the principal structure on the site. The height and size of the structures shall adhere to the zoning bylaw's regulations for accessory buildings and in no instance exceed the height and size of the principal structure.



Demolition

Demolition as defined in the NPD bylaw is "the act of pulling down, destroying, removing, or razing 50% or more of a building, or starting the work of destruction of 50% or more with the intent of completing the same." The demolition of an NPD building, or part of an NPD building, requires binding review by the NPDC.

Demolition will be approved only if the following two conditions are both met:

Condition #1

Either, the applicant demonstrates that alternatives to demolition, such as renovation or adaptive reuse, have been considered and that no alternative is reasonably feasible,

OR

The building has been determined structurally unsound, based upon a written technical report prepared by an architect or professional engineer registered in Massachusetts that clearly demonstrates that the building presents a risk to public health, safety and welfare.

Condition #2

The NPDC also approves the applicant's proposal either for: (A) new construction to replace the demolished building or part of thereof, OR (B) restoration of the site in the event the building is not replaced.



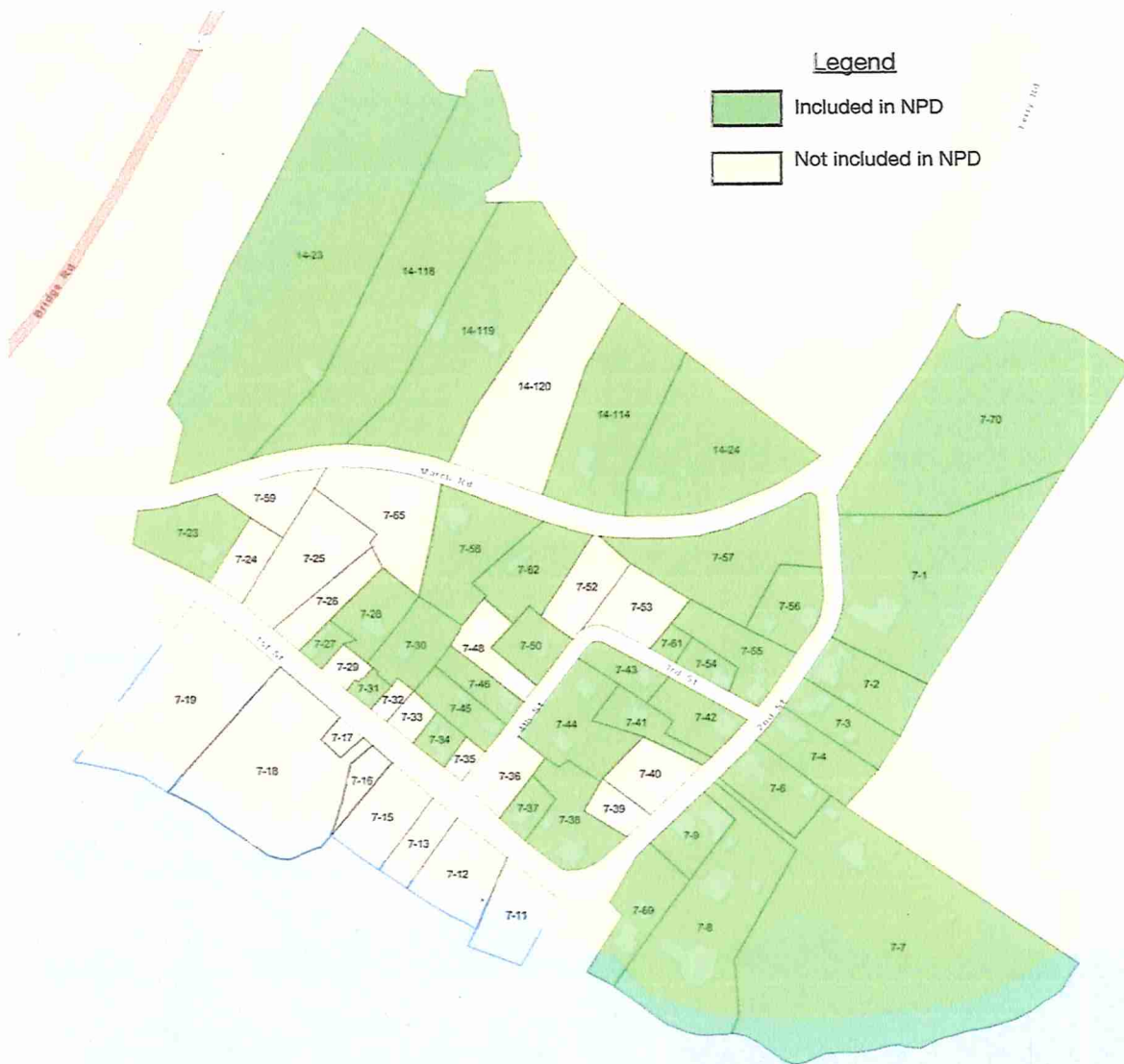
Useful Bylaw References

<u>Section 163-8</u>	EXEMPTIONS
<u>Section 163-9</u>	ADVISORY REVIEW
<u>Section 163-10</u>	ALTERATIONS THAT REQUIRE BINDING REVIEW
<u>Section 163-11</u>	DESIGN STANDARDS
<u>Appendix A</u>	INCLUDED RING'S ISLAND NPD PROPERTIES

Helpful Resources

<u>Town of Salisbury</u>
<u>Salisbury Zoning -Bylaws, Maps & Tables</u>
<u>Building Permit Application Instructions</u>

Ring's Island Neighborhood Preservation District Map & Property List



3 First St
 11 First St
 13 First St
 17 First St
 19 First St
 27 First St
 33 First St
 34 First St
 35 First St
 2 Second St
 4 Second St
 6 Second St
 8 Second St
 10 Second St
 11 Second St
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 13 Second St
 14 Second St
 15 Second St
 16 Second St
 18 Second St
 20 Second St
 2 Third St
 5 Third St
 3 Fourth St
 5 Fourth St
 8 Fourth St
 9 Fourth St
 9 March Rd
 11 March Rd
 12 March Rd
 13 March Rd
 14 March Rd
 18 March Rd
 23 March Rd
 25 March Rd