

205 East Main Street, Port Jefferson.



Preliminary Historic Significance Review

At the request of the Port Jefferson Free Library, a preliminary evaluation of 205 East Main Street was carried out in order to provide an overall understanding of the structure's potential historic significance, associated requirements and review guidelines, as well as possible options for use, relocation, and/or removal. It was noted that the stimulus behind this investigation was based upon an upcoming planned expansion of the overall library and possible options for the structure at 205 East Main Street, including adaptive reuse, renovation and/or potential relocation. Given the Library's high visibility within the local community, and desire to reflect local community goals, this investigation in tandem with an architectural assessment of current library physical resources, was seen as a prudent first phase process.

The scope of work carried out during this study included the following tasks:

- Initial review meeting with Library Director for general orientation and insight;
- On site review and investigation of overall spaces and physical fabric;
- Historic archival research regarding the historic significance of the structure;
- On-line research review of background information, archival view and regulations;
- Inquiry / dialogue with relevant regulatory and local oversight entities;
- Assessment of on-site observations, archival research and prioritization of findings;
- Development of reference materials.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – 205 EAST MAIN STREET

The structure located at 205 East Main Street, a.k.a. the “1812 House” (Thomas Bayles House) survives as a largely intact historic structure that has been identified as both historically and architecturally significant, and which exists within a local Historic District that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As such, the structure requires professional preservation review at the state level regarding any proposed physical alterations to the structure. This is not to say that changes cannot be carried out, but only following standard design guidelines, professional preservation review and approval from relevant overseeing entities. Furthermore, it is less common that historic interiors fall under similar review except in rare cases where historic integrity and intact context is necessary for proper interpretation of the structure. While such review may provide comment regarding interior spaces as well as recommendations for specific treatment, greater flexibility is generally allowed regarding how interior historic fabric and spaces are treated, particularly with regard to necessary adaptation for updated utilities, functionality and upgrades uses.

The structure itself presents a strong opportunity for potential adaptive reuse and the surrounding site may offer an equally strong opportunity for appropriate linkage to the library through connection facilities. The preservation review process is designed to provide assistance and is best facilitated when engaged as early as possible during examination and design stages, in order to foster a productive dialogue, efficient process and successful outcome.

In addition, the structure and surrounding historic district is regarded by the local community as a valuable asset and which recognizes the influential role the historic district plays in Port Jefferson’s thriving tourist industry, as well as its contribution to the quality of life in the area. The Port Jefferson Free Library is further regarded as an important community asset and has pro-actively elected to investigate appropriate options for consideration regarding potential use of the structure. Therefore, engaging in a preservation review process presents an opportunity to both fully investigate appropriate and sanctioned options, as well as fulfilling a role of responsible and considerate action on the part of a central community oriented organization.

Based upon a review of the structure in tandem with archival research and confirmation inquiry with relevant regulatory and oversight entities, a summary of relevant details can be made:

- The Thomas Bayles House/a.k.a. “1812 House” located at 205 East Main Street survives as a largely intact historic structure, both in terms of its contextual siting and primary form, as well as

it retention of interior spaces, physical fabric and aesthetic details.

- The historic background associated with the structure is significant both in terms of the family name Bayles which is prominent in the area and integral to the local shipbuilding industry, as well as prolifically represented through surviving local historic buildings [i.e. Thomas Bayles House/a.k.a. “1812 House” (1812/c.1850), Bayles Chandlery (1900), Bayles Shipyard (1917)-listed on the National Register of Historic Places; Elisha Bayles House “Cookie Hill” (1802), Bayles Homestead (1802), George Frank Bayles House (1880), Hamilton Tooker Bayles House (1880)].
- As one of the 87 historic structures surviving within the historic district (from 1830-1917), the Thomas Bayles House/a.k.a. “1812 House” is historically important given its context as one of only six surviving historic structures in relation to first phase of development/early shipbuilding in Port Jefferson (from 1800-1830).
- While historic structures as a general rule are not restricted from proposed alteration unless federal monies have been allocated to them, association as a designated landmark and/or placement within a historic district normally requires that any and all proposals for treatment of the structure are reviewed to provide comment on the relative appropriateness of proposed work, and are therefore subject to local regulations.
- An initial Reconnaissance Level Historic Resource Survey (1998) of the Village of Port Jefferson was carried out, and was used as the basis for nomination of the Port Jefferson Village Historic District (2002, registered in 2005).
- The basis of this work identified the Thomas Bayles House as a “contributing resource” within the Port Jefferson Village Historic District, which has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places (2005).
- As the Port Jefferson Free Library has likely received NYS Educational Funds or a State Construction Grant, and/or plans to apply for such funds, that status further requires review at the SHPO level, as does any work requiring SEQRA review.
- Within historic districts, any structure that is considered a “contributing resource” is required to follow the recommendations of SHPO.
- SHPO review is based upon standard guidelines for treatment of historic structures, as listed in the National Standards of the Secretary of the Interior related to preservation guidelines.
- Within such guidelines, historic significance is valued, and potential adverse impact by proposed treatments is assessed.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Historic preservation has long been seen as a positive influence to local communities that are fortunate to possess historic resources and surviving physical elements of history and architecture. The Village of Port Jefferson possesses both a culturally rich local history and an intact collection of historic building stock, which has been recognized as an important component of local community identity and its vibrant tourist industry.

“Throughout New York State, communities are recognizing that historic buildings, sites, and neighborhoods form the core of economically stable and attractive areas which make an important contribution to the quality of life. Many counties, cities, towns, and villages are seeking opportunities to preserve the special character of their communities and neighborhoods and integrate historic

resources into planning efforts.”¹

In particular, the Village possess an intact area of historic structures that has been identified as a collective National Register historic district, due to its cohesive architectural integrity, as well as its association with the development of shipbuilding in the area and evolving maritime industry throughout the region. The historic district is physically diverse, and includes both industrial/commercial structures, as well as dwellings, many of which were built by families associated in the shipbuilding and maritime industry, in particular the family Bayles.

“The boundaries are drawn to include the concentration of residences and commercial buildings close to the waterfront on the south and east sides of Port Jefferson Harbor which are associated with the historic context and which retain integrity.”²

“The Port Jefferson Historic District is a historically and architecturally significant concentration of residences and commercial buildings associated with the historic context of Port Jefferson’s Shipbuilding and Maritime Economy, 1797-1917. This economy was the dominant force that shaped Port Jefferson during the nineteenth century. The commercial buildings near the waterfront and the adjoining residential neighborhood recall the era when Port Jefferson was the most active shipbuilding center on Long Island and enjoyed a booming maritime trade. The intact neighborhoods of houses on small lots and narrow streets, typical of a nineteenth-century New England port town, illustrates the scale of the shipbuilding and maritime enterprise, the range of professions involved in it and the social and economic dynamics of the community. The contributing buildings are architecturally significant as distinctive examples of architectural styles and building types associated with the historic context.”³

“The Village of Port Jefferson successfully reused certain industrial maritime buildings, such as the former J.M. Bayles & Son shipbuilders complex, today the Village Center.”⁴

Within the historic district, the Thomas Bayles House (1812/c.1850) still stands on its original location at 205 East Main Street (corner of Vineyard Place), as a substantially intact example of historic architecture from the earliest stages of Port Jefferson’s shipbuilding development era.

“The Port Jefferson Historic District includes a mix of residences, commercial buildings and a church on East Main Street, which extends south from the harbor, and residences on eight streets which rise up the hillside east of that street. The district is composed principally of residences which date from 1800 to 1915, with the vast majority being Greek Revival style and Italianate style dwellings built from the 1840’s through the 1870’s. Within the district are 96 contributing primary buildings.” . . .
“The houses that comprise the primary component of the historic district are on eight streets . . .

¹ “Model Landmarks Preservation Local Law for New York State Municipalities,” New York State – Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Draft, 2013. P.1

² Heffner, Robert J. (April 2002). “National Register of Historic Places Registration: Port Jefferson Village Historic District,” New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; Retrieved 2010-02-20. (NYS SHPO 02NR04918_101826; Continuation Sheet Section 10 & 11, Page 47).

³ (NYS SHPO 02NR04918_101826; Continuation Sheet Section 8, Page 32).

⁴ “Long Island’s Industrial Heritage at Risk,” Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities; www.aageastend.com/.../splia-long-islands-industrial-heritage-at-risk/; 2015.

from East Main Street. These are South Street, Prospect Street, Vineyard Place, Thompson Street . .
”⁵

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

In particular, the Bayles family name is both historically prominent locally, and widely represented in some of the earliest built, and many still surviving examples of historic architecture within the Village of Port Jefferson.

“The Bayles family was the leading shipbuilding family in Port Jefferson. For over three generations, from 1836 until 1917, they built over 140 vessels. Their shipyard was located at the foot of the bluff on the southeast part of the harbor. The top of this bluff became known as Bayles Hill beginning in 1873 when the family bought the property and started building their homes there. The Bayles houses, excepting the Hamilton T Bayles house, were situated so they overlooked the shipyard, the harbor and Long Island Sound. Further, the yards of the houses created a common space where the families could easily gather together.”⁶

In addition to the Thomas Bayles House/a.k.a. “1812 House” (1812/c.1850), several other Bayles family-associated structures were constructed, including the following: Elisha Bayles House “Cookie Hill” (1802), Bayles Homestead (1802), James Eban Bayles House (1876), George Frank Bayles House (1880), Hamilton Tooker Bayles House (1880), Captain Edward E. Bayles House (1880), Bayles Chandlery (1900), and the Bayles Shipyard a.k.a. “Village Center” (1917) which is prominent as a stand-alone registered historic landmark.

“On the waterfront across from the foot of East Main Street is the Bayles Shipyard, a property [individually] listed on the National Register of Historic Places.”⁷

As such, surviving historic structures such as the Thomas Bayles House should be regarded as important contributing resources worthy of preservation, and which will be seen by the local citizenry as a valuable community asset. The local historic district contains a rich blend of historic building stock with three distinct phases of development: 1800-1830 (6 surviving historic structures), 1840-1870 (71 surviving historic structures), and 1880-1917 (10 surviving historic structures). The fact that the Bayles House remains as one of only six surviving structures from the early shipbuilding development era between 1800-1830 enhances its relative value even further.

“The contributing buildings within the Port Jefferson Historic District reflect many aspects of the historic context. Houses in the historic district were built for a wide range of individuals involved in the shipbuilding and maritime economy and illustrate the nature of the economy, the range of professions involved in it and the social and economic dynamics of the community. The historic commercial buildings and the church on East Main Street also recall the prosperous era of this economy and link the residential neighborhood to the waterfront.” . . . “The district contains only six

⁵ (NYS SHPO 02NR04918_101826; Continuation Sheet Section 7, Page 1).

⁶ Port Homes: Historical Homes of Port Jefferson. Historical Society of Greater Port Jefferson, Port Jefferson, NY. 2002. P. 1.

⁷ (NYS SHPO 02NR04918_101826; Continuation Sheet Section 7, Page 1).

contributing houses from the 1800's through the 1830's, reflecting the slow development of these early years of the shipbuilding and maritime economy.”⁸

“Houses of shipbuilders constructed before 1840 recall the small scale, yet prosperous, ship building activity before the boom period. The houses of the early shipbuilders include the c. 1815[1812] Thomas Bayles House (205 East Main Street). . . . The Federal style Thomas Bayles House and William L. Jones House are evidence of the substantial achievements of these early shipbuilders.”⁹

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Thomas Bayles House is architecturally significant through its retention of period architectural elements and examples of stylistic change through periods of separate ownership, and is documented in local historical publications and archival materials. In addition, while the exterior has undergone changes (i.e. the removal of porches, addition of the 3rd floor shed dormer, loss of the south 1812 chimney stack above the roof), the interior is substantially intact and retains the basic essence of its original treatments.

“The contributing buildings of the Port Jefferson Historic District are architecturally significant as distinctive examples of architectural styles and building types associated with the historic context.” . . . “The historic district contains a small number of houses built before the shipbuilding boom of the 1840's. Particularly noteworthy among these is the 1815[1812] Thomas Bayles House which retains Federal style features including an entrance with sidelights and a transom with delicate tracery and a cornice frieze enriched with egg and dart molding.”¹⁰

“The original Federal style house, which consisted of the present-day, smaller south wing, was built by Beriah Petty for Thomas Bayles, brother of Elisha Bayles of “Cookie Hill.” A shipbuilder in the village, therefore given the title of captain, Captain Bayles was credited with building the sloop *Beaver* in 1816. He did not build any other ships of record.

The House, also known as the “1812 House,” was the residence of shipbuilder Lewis Hulse in the 1840's and 1850's. He built nine vessels, one brig, one sloop and seven schooners between 1821 and 1855 and is thought to have altered the house to its present Greek Revival style.

Architectural Notes: This Federal style was prominent immediately after the Revolutionary War and was the first purely American style of architecture. The “1812” House was originally Federal and was altered in the Greek Revival fashion, possibly by Lewis Hulse. Cedar shakes cover the exterior of the two-story, side gabled house with a three-bay front façade. The windows have nine-over-six panes of glass. A center chimney has an open fireplace in the first story. The porch is a later addition. The Georgian style doorway, changed from the original, now has sidelights and a transom with delicate tracery and a cornice frieze that is enriched with egg and dart molding.”¹¹

⁸ (NYS SHPO 02NR04918_101826; Continuation Sheet Section 8, Page 37).

⁹ (NYS SHPO 02NR04918_101826; Continuation Sheet Section 8, Page 38).

¹⁰ (NYS SHPO 02NR04918_101826; Continuation Sheet Section 8, Page 41).

¹¹ Port Homes: Historical Homes of Port Jefferson. Historical Society of Greater Port Jefferson, Port Jefferson, NY. 2002. P. 20.

Annotated List of Properties – 205 East Main Street

Included in the Historic District Registration is the following description of 205 East Main Street (the Thomas Bayles House; from the annotated List of Properties):

“Resource: Thomas Bayles House Approximate Date: 1812
Address: 205 East Main Street Tax Lot No. 206-12-4-21
Description: Two-story, side-gabled, shingled residence with a three-bay front façade and a side hall plan. Federal style features include the doorway which has sidelights and transom with delicate tracery; the cornice frieze which is enriched with egg and dart molding; and the double-hung windows with six[nine]-over-six light sash. Built for Thomas Bayles, an early shipbuilder (PJHS) and traditionally known as “the 1812 House.””¹²

It should be further noted that 205 East Main Street (the Thomas Bayles House) is listed as a ‘Contributing Resource’ and therefore an integral component which retains integrity within the historic district. As such, all proposed treatments of the structure will be subject to full review by NYS-SHPO and as per established preservation guidelines according to local municipal regulations as well as Local Landmarks Preservation Laws.

OBSERVATIONS

General

- Both halves of the structure appear to be substantially intact, with spaces retained showing minimal alteration.
- The original siting and street context survives.
- The original form and footprint of the structure survives.
- Original horse-hair plaster exists throughout.
- Original window sash and hardware survive.
- Original Doors survive throughout.
- Flooring throughout appears to be original.
- Original trim and stair rail/balusters survive intact.
- Chimneys are largely intact, with typical settlement and cracking at hearths.
- The original bee-hive oven, curved brick flue, and firebox below appear intact.

EXTERIOR

- The structure maintains its original siting and setback from the street, which is similar to the adjacent Library west wing.
- Based upon surviving physical evidence and archival information, the exterior form appears to be largely intact with the exception of removed/altered front porches, upgraded front door, rebuilt chimney, 3rd floor shed dormer and loss of the original 1812 front door / window and chimney stack above the roofline.

¹² (NYS SHPO 02NR04918_101826; Continuation Sheet Section 7, Page 11).

- Wall surfaces continue to display wood shingles excluding board & batten wall boards at the 1812 front façade.
- Early wall shingles appear to exist at the main block, east façade, whereas early clapboard appears to exist at the 1812 section at the north façade.
- Exterior trim is mainly intact.

INTERIOR

1812 House: 1st Floor - Main Room

- Chimney is largely intact at the first floor but cut off at the attic level.
- Evidence of a later stove exists through an exhaust pipe opening above the mantle.
- Moldings and wainscot appear to be intact.
- An original 9/6 double-hung (d/h) sash window with set pin and early hardware exists at the east.
- The front wall seems to have been covered over with rough sawn pine boards, but the extended thickness of the wall may suggest that the original wall treatments still exist underneath.
- One of the only apparent changes is the insertion of a modern window and front entry door.
- The ceiling joists appear intact, although the insert panels between are later additions.

1812 House: 1st Floor – Lean-To Section

- The room may have been altered in terms of having two entry doors, with the likelihood that a partition wall existed between, although corroborating evidence is lacking, thereby suggesting a possible alternate use.
- Moldings (base, window, and one of the two doors) appears modern.
- Sheetrock appears to have been used on the walls; possibly replacing earlier plaster.
- An early 9-pane sash with intact glass exists at the north, offset by modern 6/6 d/h sash at the east and south.

c. 1850 Main Block: 1st Floor - Front Room

- Chimney and firebox, as well as the mantel and surround, and side cupboard appear intact.
- An original floor hatch to the basement appears intact.
- Original 9/6 double-hung (d/h) sash windows with set pin and early hardware exists at the south and west.
- The door appears original but may have been moved from another location in the house; a missing door appears to be stored in the basement.
- Plaster walls and ceilings appear intact.
- Flooring appears intact.
- Non-historic additions include radiator covers and piping, replica ceiling fixture, and some replica trim elements.

c. 1850 Main Block: 1st Floor - Rear Room

- Chimney and firebox, as well as the mantel and surround, and side cupboard appear intact.
- Original 9/6 double-hung (d/h) sash windows with set pin with mixed hardware exists at the east.
- Plaster walls and ceilings appear intact, with sporadic repairs.
- Flooring appears intact.
- Non-historic additions include radiator covers and piping.

c. 1850 Main Block: 1st Floor - Hall

- Front door intact although stripped of painted finishes revealing some replacement wood elements.
- Stair, rail and balusters intact.
- Trim mostly intact with chair rail to be verified via paint analysis for accuracy.
- Original 9/6 double-hung (d/h) sash windows with set pin and early hardware exists at the north.
- Wall dividing the front and rear Hall sections is a later addition.

c. 1850 Main Block: 1st Floor - Rear Hall (Later Kitchen)

- An original closet was converted to a water closet with working toilet; the position of the toilet now blocks two earlier inner doors to access below the stair.
- The door and hinges appear intact.
- Similar to the front Hall, the trim carries through and is mostly intact with chair rail to be verified via paint analysis for accuracy.
- Similar to the front Hall, an original 9/6 double-hung (d/h) sash windows with set pin and early hardware exists at the north.
- An original exterior rear door with surviving threshold was later converted to a modern window.
- The space was later converted to a kitchen.
- Wall dividing the front and rear Hall sections is a later addition.
- Current plaster damage is due to a ruptured pipe at the 3rd floor during the last winter season.

c. 1850 Main Block: 2nd Floor – Front Room

- Original 9/6 double-hung (d/h) sash windows with set pin and early hardware exists at the south and west.
- Chimney and firebox, as well as the mantel and surround, side cupboard and paneled wall appear intact.
- Doors and trim appear intact.
- Plaster walls and ceilings appear intact.
- Flooring appears intact.
- Non-historic additions include radiator covers and piping.

c. 1850 Main Block: 2nd Floor – Rear Room

- Original 9/6 double-hung (d/h) sash windows with set pin and early hardware exists at the east.
- Doors and trim appear intact.
- Plaster walls and ceilings appear intact.
- Flooring appears intact.
- Early painted finishes appear to survive below existing finishes.
- Non-historic additions include radiator covers and piping.

c. 1850 Main Block: 2nd Floor – Hall

- Stair, rail and balusters intact.
- Trim and chair rail mostly intact and carries through to rear bathroom.
- Original 9/6 double-hung (d/h) sash windows with set pin and early hardware exists at the north and west.
- Wall dividing the Hall and bathroom appears early but may be a later addition.

- Flooring appears intact.

c. 1850 Main Block: 2nd Floor – Bath

- Original 9/6 double-hung (d/h) sash window with set pin and early hardware exists at the north.
- Chair rail appears intact and carries through from the Hall.
- Door appears intact, and wall dividing the Hall and bathroom appears early but may be a later addition.
- Non-historic additions include bath fixtures, vanity, raised flooring and sheetrock surfaces.
- Damaged sheetrock at the bathroom is due to a ruptured pipe during the last winter season.

c. 1850 Main Block: 3rd Floor

- Stair, rail, balusters and enclosure wall with door/hardware intact.
- Flooring appears intact.
- Original 9/6 double-hung (d/h) sash windows with set pin and early hardware exists at the north.
- Non-historic additions include bath, bedroom partition walls/doors and 6/6 d/h window sash, although the south side 6/6 d/h is older.

Basement

- A full basement now exists at the main block and 1812 section, with a crawl space under the 1812 Lean-To, whereas a smaller original main block basement was likely; historic photos show evidence of a door entrance at the main block whereas an original root cellar or similar storage likely existed at the 1812 section.
- A recent stabilization project added reinforced foundation shoring, steel support posts, repaired framing, and poured concrete floors.
- Rubble stone foundation walls are visible at the north, whereas rubble stone with brick above exists at the west.
- Earlier 6 pane awning window exist at the west.
- New concrete block walls exist partially at the east and south walls, and under the central chimney stack.
- An original firebox appears intact, with misc. repairs made over time.
- Stored items include interior doors, a “Dutch” exterior door.
- Recent upgraded modern utilities including a new 100 Amp electrical panel, and Burnham gas boiler with indirect hot water heater have been installed.

CONCLUSION

Given the strong evidence of surviving historic fabric and locally relevant historic context, as well as prominent location and status within a National Register historic district, the Thomas Bayles House (a.k.a. “1812 House”) should be regarded as worthy of preservation. As such, options for use should consider methods of appropriate adaptive reuse and integration where possible. Furthermore, the “original context” or location of intact historic structures is regarded as highly important, therefore proposals for removal or demolition will likely not be favorably received during review processes. In addition, given the positive sentiment of the local community with regard to the historic district and its historic building stock, in tandem to the district’s supportive economic enhancement of the local tourist

trade, such proposals would likely be met with local resistance. Therefore, it would appear to be in the library's best interest to further investigate options for retaining and adaptively reusing the structure to the degree possible. Incorporating preservation guideline options and historic architectural design will further foster successful recommendations to consider.

References

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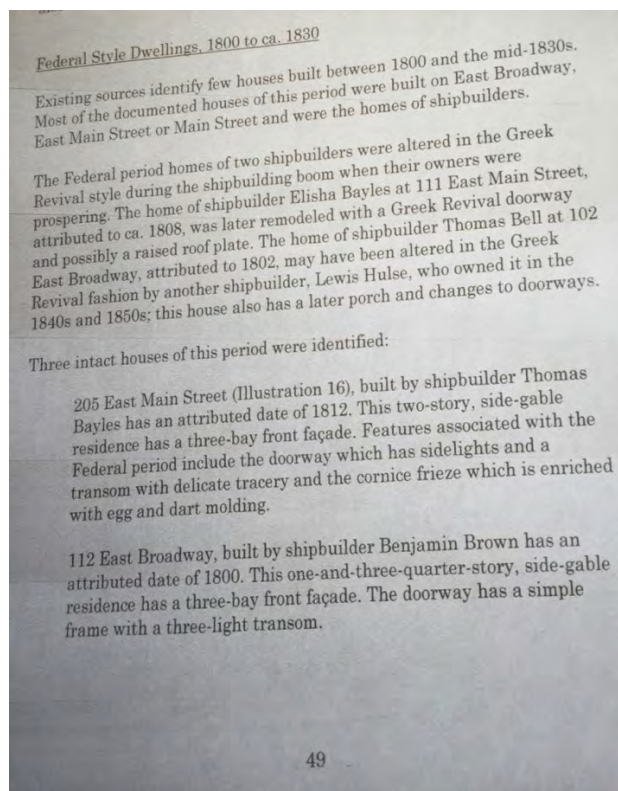
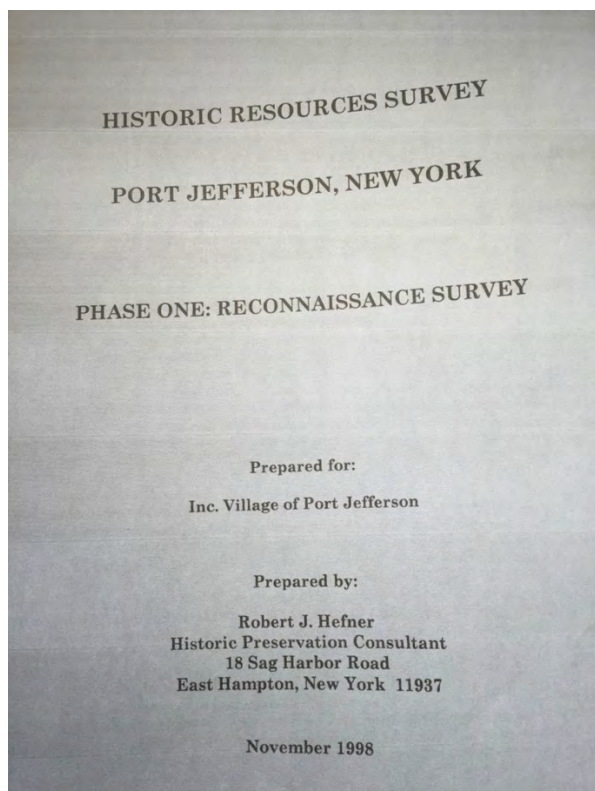
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BACKGROUND MATERIALS



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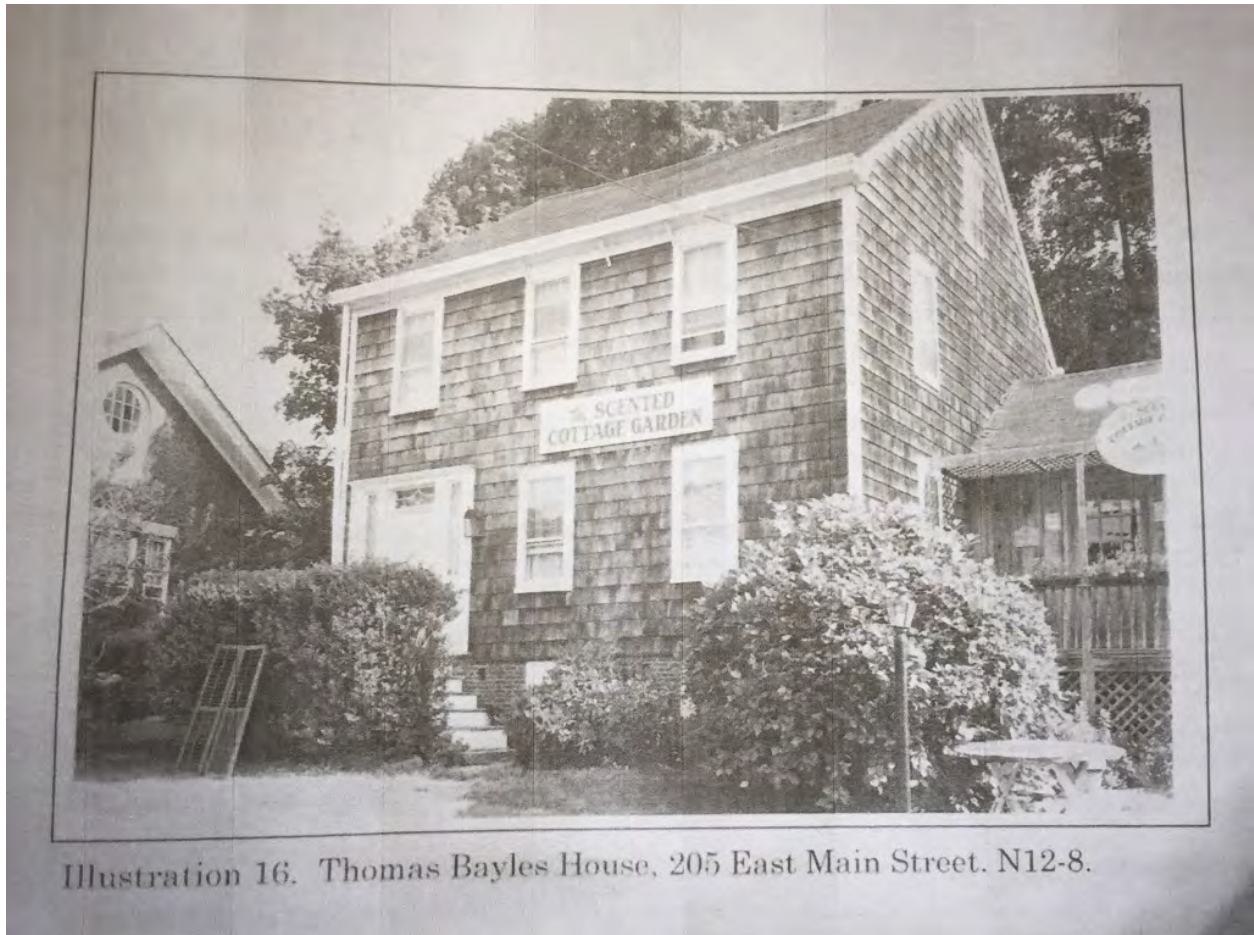


Illustration 16. Thomas Bayles House, 205 East Main Street. N12-8.

Heffner, Robert J. (November 1998). "Historic Resources Survey: Port Jefferson, New York – Phase One: Reconnaissance Survey;" Inc. Village of Port Jefferson.



Thomas Bayles, the brother of Elisha, built the smaller, south wing of this house, which still stands at the corner of East Main Street and Vineyard Place, in 1812. It was later occupied by shipbuilder Lewis Hulse. Thomas Bayles is known to have built the sloop *Beaver* in 1816, while Hulse built nine vessels between 1821 and 1855. The building is still known as the 1812 House. (Courtesy of Frances Child.)

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“Residence, 205 East Main Street,” The Village of Port Jefferson (website), on-line Historical Archive, current.



“Residence, 205 East Main Street,” The Village of Port Jefferson (website), on-line Historical Archive, current.



“Residence, 205 East Main Street,” The Village of Port Jefferson (website), on-line Historical Archive, current.

PORT JEFFERSON Village Hot. Dier
PORT JEFFERSON, SUTCLIFF CO, NY

PORT JEFFERSON HARBOR
UTM ZONE 18

① 662587E / 4534548N
② 662858E / 4534639N
③ 662925E / 4534717N
④ 662400E / 4534171N
⑤ 662676E / 4534136N

Belle Terre
Poquott
Port Jefferson
Port Jefferson Station
Norwood Avenue School
John F. Kennedy Mid Sch
Water

