

Cultural Landscapes



Unit 2: Cultural Landscapes of Cape Cod National Seashore

It's your job! Be a Historic Landscape Architect and determine if Fort Hill should be preserved as a Rural Historic Landscape.

In this unit you will be searching for clues to a landscape's past. Start this unit at the lower parking lot of Fort Hill, located on the left, just past the Captain Penniman House. The Fort Hill Trail starts at the far end of the lot.

Time: 70 minutes

Career Profile:

What does a Historic Landscape Architect do?

- Surveys and records culturally significant landscapes.
- Rehabilitates historic landscapes for study and enjoyment.
- Designs landscapes that balance historic preservation with new uses.
- Creates safe, healthy, educational, and aesthetically pleasing parks.
- Facilitates stewardship of outdoors spaces and land.



Emily Donaldson
Landscape Architect

What is a Rural Historic Landscape?

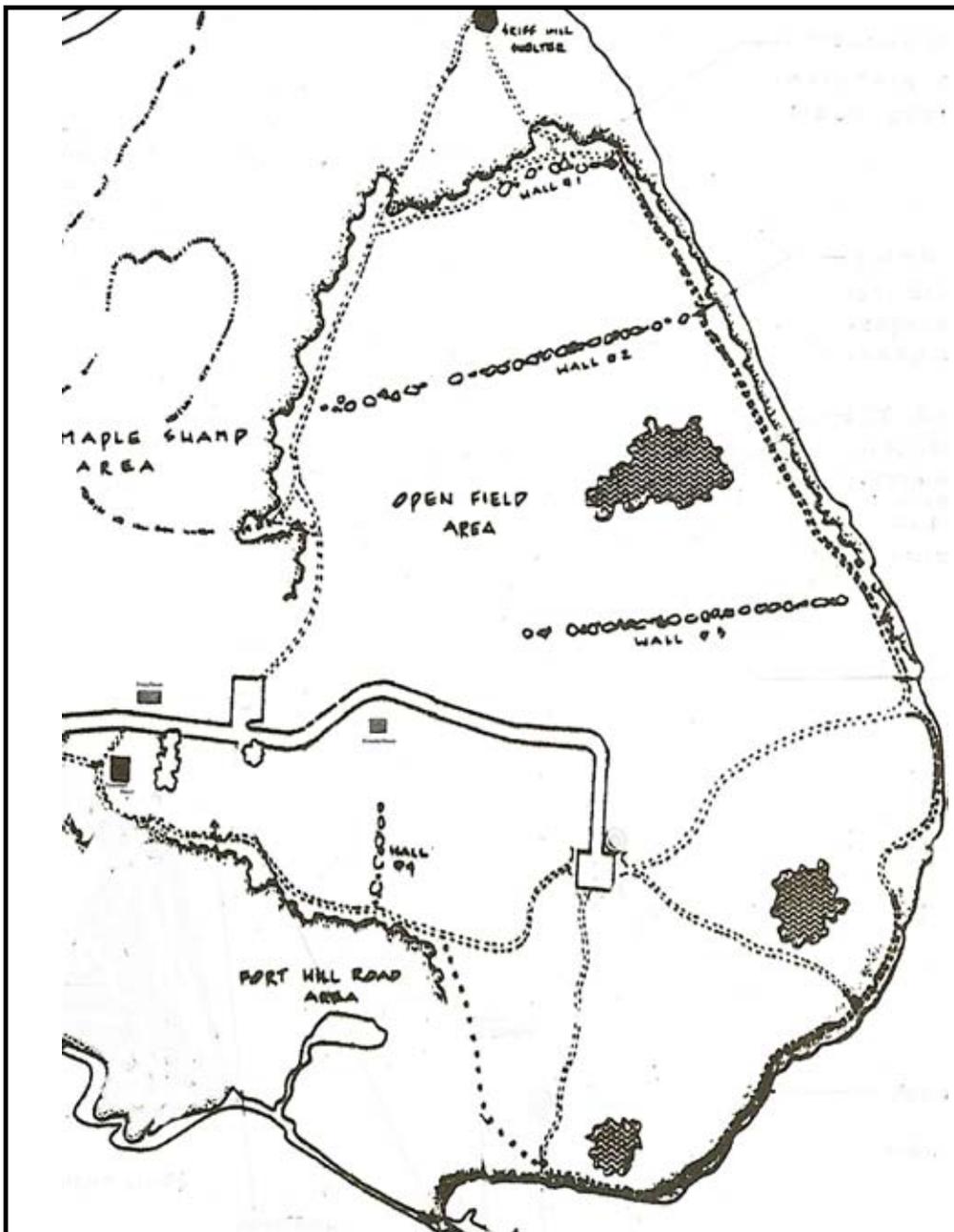
Rural Historic Landscapes are geographical areas that have been modified by historically important human activity. These landscapes reflect the day-to-day activities of people engaged in traditional work such as mining, fishing, and farming. Often, the landscape developed in response to both the forces of nature and the need of people to make a living.



Cultural Landscapes

To determine whether an area is worthy of being preserved as a Rural Historic Landscape, the Historic Landscape Architect looks for clues to both the significance of the area (how important its story is) and the integrity of its components (how close they are to their historic condition). Activity 1 can be completed by walking the first 100 yards of the trail, from the parking lot near the Penniman House to the first fork in the trail. Look for the 2 “X” marks on the map.

Use this map to help you complete Activity 1 on the next few pages.



1. Look for historic buildings
2. Cultural Traditions-look at decorations around historic houses, farming evidence
3. Small -scale Elements- property markers, old foundations
4. Transportation Networks- trails, roads, ocean routes, railways
5. Natural Features-meadow, swamp, forest, marsh, ocean
6. Boundaries- extent of cultural landscape
7. Archeological Sites- Skiff Hill, see unit 4



Cultural Landscapes



ACTIVITY 1 - SEARCHING FOR CLUES TO A LANDSCAPE'S PAST

You are the Historic Landscape Architect hired to determine if Fort Hill should be preserved as a Rural Historic Landscape. Many human activities have shaped the landscape at Fort Hill. The questions you must ask—and answer—are:

- Have the activities have been significant in the history of Cape Cod?
- Has the landscape shaped by those historic activities remained mostly intact?

To answer these questions, you will survey Fort Hill systematically by looking at each of seven landscape characteristics.

Complete the following seven exercises to help you decide on the significance and integrity of the different characteristics. Use the map on the following page to guide you from #1 to #7. Start at the west side corner of the parking lot, by the paved road. Record each decision on the table at the end of the activity with a yes or a no.

- 1. HISTORIC BUILDINGS:** Two qualities that make a building historically important are its age and its architectural style. A building's shape is a great clue in determining its age and style.

Use your pencil to trace the outline of each house on the photos below. Then, use your judgment to decide if the houses are historically significant and if they have historic integrity. Record your answers on the table at the end.



Seth Knowles farmhouse, built circa 1790. Colonial style. This property is privately owned. Please view from a distance.



Sylvanus Knowles farmhouse, now known as the Avery House, built about 1864. Greek Revival style. Sits directly across the road from Penniman House and is privately owned.



Captain Edward Penniman House, c. 1868 ; excellent example of French 2nd Empire style; the only whaling captains house in Eastham; landscape setting is intact.



Cultural Landscapes



2. CULTURAL TRADITIONS: For centuries, some of the most important traditional activities on Cape Cod have been farming, fishing, and family life.

From the edge of the parking lot, at the trail sign by the edge of the road, look around carefully and see if you can find these bits of evidence showing that farming, fishing and family life have been important at Fort Hill. Circle the ones you find.

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Weathervane | <input type="checkbox"/> Basketball | <input type="checkbox"/> Whale fins | <input type="checkbox"/> Whale bones |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Farm equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> Swing | <input type="checkbox"/> Specialized flags | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleared fields | <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit trees | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | |

Would you say that the traditional activities of Cape Cod have significantly shaped the Fort Hill landscape? Does the evidence have historic integrity? *Record your answers on the table at the end.*

3. SMALL-SCALE ELEMENTS: Small-scale elements include things like footbridges, gates, markers, and old foundations. Often, they are the oldest and/or only evidence left of historic activity.

Walk up the Fort Hill Trail through the field from the lower parking lot until you find an upright stone with a "T" on it.



The "T" stone is a boundary marker. The "T" is for Reverend Treat (1648-1717), the first confirmed white settler to live permanently at Fort Hill. He was a farmer and was Eastham's minister for 45 years.

From looking at the stone and reading the above fact, would you say that the T-stone is historically significant and that it has retained its historic integrity? *Record your on the table at the end and write your reasoning below.*

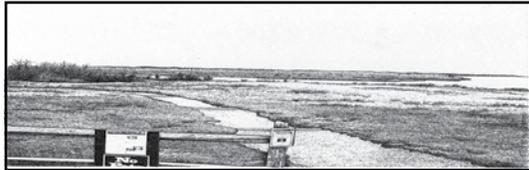


Bonus: From your position in front of the T-stone, can you view another small-scale element—the foundation of an old barn?



Cultural Landscapes

4. **TRANSPORTATION NETWORKS:** Transportation networks wear patterns into the landscape. They show us how people traveled, communicated, and traded.



Walk to the top of the rise. List three transportation networks that would have been used in the 1800s. Hints: White sails, loud whistle, rickety-clanky wheels.

Would you say the transportation networks on and to Fort Hill are significant to its history? Do they have historic integrity? *Record your answers on the table at the end and write your reasoning below*

5. **NATURAL FEATURES:** Natural features are the elements of the landscape are those that have not been altered by human activity. They include the geography, soils, water formations, weather, vegetation and wildlife. Humans often shape landscapes in response to these natural conditions.

Walk up to the fork in the path. The natural features below can be seen from where you stand. Your job is to draw a line from the feature to a likely human response to it:

NATURAL FEATURE

HUMAN RESPONSE

SALT MARSH
(In the distance to the east)

Plow it to plant corn, turnips, and asparagus

SCRUB MEADOW
(Immediately to the east)

Use the peat and the wood as fuel

WILD CHERRY TREES
(Beside the path)

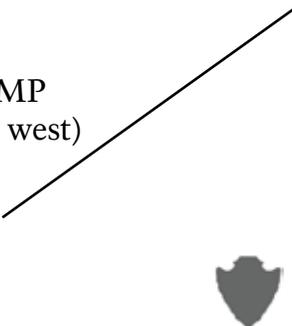
Hunt whales and travel up and down the coast

RED MAPLE SWAMP
(Immediately to the west)

Create a boat landing at its edge

OCEAN
(In the distance)

Make yummy jam and nice furniture



Cultural Landscapes

Would you say that human response to natural conditions has significantly shaped the Fort Hill landscape? Do the natural features have historic integrity (are the features similar to how they were during their time of use)? *Record your answers on the table at the end*

6. INDENTIFIABLE BOUNDARIES: Identifiable boundaries help the Historic Landscape Architect determine the extent of a cultural landscape. They also help separate activities within a landscape.

Continue up the trail to the area just before it transitions from wide to narrow, gravel to sand. Check off which boundaries you can see:

___ A. Forest-to-field

D. ___ Residential-to-undeveloped

___ B. Land-to-sea

E. ___ Roadway

___ C. Human-made stone wall
(look carefully)

7. ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES: Archeological sites are clues to human activity before written history.

Stay at the fork in the path. Notice the sign for the “Sharpening Rock” (also known as “Indian Rock”) archeological site. You are not going to walk that far in this activity. If you get a chance to complete Unit 5, you can assess the significance and integrity of that landscape feature then.



Take a look at the 1930 aerial photograph of Fort Hill on the next page. Find the boundaries listed above on the photograph. Put an “A” on a forest-to-field boundary, a “B” on a land-to-sea boundary, and so on. Bonus: Can you find your current position on the photograph? If so, put an “X” there. (Draw the parking lots and road to the upper lot.)

Would you say that the boundaries you can see today provide us with significant information about the history of Fort Hill? Would you say the boundaries have historic integrity? *Record your answers on the table at the end.*



Cultural Landscapes

Aerial photo of Fort Hill taken in the 1940's: *Draw the parking lot at the top of Fort Hill and the road that leads to it on the image. Next draw the hiking trail using a dashed line to make the image represent Fort Hill as you observe it today.*



SUMMARY: Now that you have worked through this unit, fill in the table below.
Yes or No?

Do the following landscape characteristics have significance and integrity?

Landscape Characteristic:	Significance	Integrity
Historic Buildings		
Cultural Traditions (that changed the land)		
Small-Scale Elements (foot-bridges, mill stones, gates etc.)		
Historic Transportation Networks		
Natural Features		
Archeological Sites		
Identifiable Boundaries		



Cultural Landscapes

Based on your survey of Fort Hill, would you recommend that it be preserved as a Rural Historic Landscape

YES

NO

FACT: The stone walls at Fort Hill are evidence of two important characteristics of Cape Cod farming from the late 1700s through the 1800s:

1. Families no longer shared community fields. Instead, farmers would section off pieces of land for each of their adult children.
2. Cape Cod soil is glacial till, full of sand and rocks. Farmers cleared the rocks off the land and used them to build walls to divide the fields.



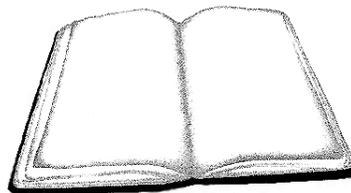
EXPLORE FURTHER:

Find out if there is a cultural landscape in or near your community. It could be a rural historic property or a designed historic landscape such as a park or garden. Explore it to find out its historic importance.

RESOURCES:

www.nps.gov/caco

www.nps.gov/history





Cultural Landscapes

Notes Page

Take your own notes, draw sketches to remind yourself of ideas you think are important.

