



Portsmouth Village Cultural Landscape Report



Cultural Resources
Southeast Region

Portsmouth Village

Cape Lookout National Seashore
Carteret County, North Carolina

Cultural Landscape Report

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About the front cover: View of the center of Portsmouth Village showing Portsmouth Methodist Church and the Jesse Babb House, October 17, 2006.

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Portsmouth Village Cultural Landscape Report

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Figure Credits

- 3 Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, Washington, D.C., call no. G3880 1590.W4 Vault. From Thomas Hariot, *A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia* (1590; reprinted New York: J. Sabin & Sons, 1871).
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- 20 Bob Simpson Collection, NPS Cape Lookout National Seashore collection, image no. C03.
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- 159 NPS Cape Lookout National Seashore collection, image no. B103.
- 160 Marian Gray Babb Collection, NPS Cape Lookout National Seashore collection, image no. B26.
- 161 Postcard, NPS Cape Lookout National Seashore collection, image no. B99.
- 162 North Carolina Archives No. N.71-1-1174, copy in NPS Cape Lookout National Seashore collection, image no. C13.
- 163 NPS Cape Lookout National Seashore collection, image no. F189.
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- 165 W. Ira Babb Collection, NPS Cape Lookout National Seashore collection, image no. A37.
- 166 Marian Gray Babb Collection, NPS Cape Lookout National Seashore collection, image no. B09.
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- 168 NPS Cape Lookout National Seashore collection, image no. F379.
- 169 NPS Cape Lookout National Seashore collection, image no. F362.
- 170 NPS Cape Lookout National Seashore collection, image no. F380.
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- 201 NPS Cape Lookout National Seashore collection, image no. F518.

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Foreword

We are pleased to make available this cultural landscape report as part of our ongoing effort to provide comprehensive documentation for the historic structures and landscapes of National Park Service units in the Southeast Region. Many individuals and institutions contributed to the successful completion of this project. We would especially like to thank former Cape Lookout National Seashore Superintendent Bob Vogel and the park staff for their support and contributions to this work. Thanks also to Deborah Slaton, project manager for Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.; Liz Sargent, project manager for John Milner Associates, Inc.; and their respective staff for their dedication to the timely and successful completion of this report. We hope this study will be a useful tool for park management and for others interested in the history and significance of the cultural landscape of Portsmouth Village.

Dan Scheidt
Chief, Cultural Resources Division
Southeast Regional Office

Introduction

Management Summary

Portsmouth Village is a National Register of Historic Places Historic District located on the northern end of Cape Lookout National Seashore, Carteret County, North Carolina. Cape Lookout National Seashore was established in 1966 “to preserve for public use and enjoyment an area in the State of North Carolina possessing outstanding natural and recreation values.”¹ Administered by the National Park Service (NPS), the National Seashore occupies a portion of North Carolina’s Outer Banks. These depositional sand-based landforms extend along much of North Carolina’s coast. Their form is constantly shifting in response to natural forces such as wind, ocean tides, storm surges, and cultural activities such as the dredging of channels for navigation. Despite their unsettled nature, the Outer Banks have been occupied for centuries by fishermen and other inhabitants. These coastal islands have also been used to protect navigation through the construction of lighthouses and Coast Guard and Life-Saving Stations. Portsmouth Village includes one of these Life-Saving Stations.

Portsmouth Village is the sole surviving village on the Core Banks south of Ocracoke Island. The Portsmouth Village Historic District contains more than sixty historic buildings and structures, as well as other cultural landscape features. In 2003, the district was heavily affected by Hurricane Isabel, which overturned more than 400 trees and damaged fences, outbuildings, cemeteries, roads, pathways, and other historic features. Both the George Dixon House and the Life-Saving Station were severely damaged by the storm. Archeological resources were exposed and new water channels formed that caused loss of land associated with a cemetery. Impacts from subsequent storms, including Hurricane Ophelia in 2005, led to the loss of hundreds more trees; to date, the cumulative

damage from these recent storms has not been fully evaluated or mitigated, and much of the district is in need of stabilization and repair.

To address these issues, the NPS engaged Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE) of Northbrook, Illinois, and their subconsultants John Milner Associates, Inc. (JMA) of Charlottesville, Virginia, to prepare a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for the Portsmouth Village Historic District. The CLR is intended to provide the park with an assessment of the character-defining features of the Portsmouth Village cultural landscape, document historic and existing conditions, and develop specific treatment recommendations to ensure its future protection. The CLR is part of a broader planning process intended to support decisions regarding management of this nationally significant cultural landscape.

Historical Summary

English settlement of coastal North Carolina began in the 1670s. During colonial times, the Outer Banks were thinly settled and used primarily for grazing stock. Portsmouth Village was initially established by an act of the colonial legislature of North Carolina in 1753 on fifty acres at the north end of North Core Bank. Prior to the opening of Hatteras Inlet in 1846, Portsmouth flourished as one of North Carolina’s primary seaports due to its location on the principal access into Pamlico Sound and proximity to other ports across the sound. The federal government established a customs house at Portsmouth in 1806, a marine hospital in 1827, and a post office in 1840. The town reached the zenith of its growth in 1860, with more than 600 residents and 109 dwellings.

1. U.S. Congress, “An Act to provide for the establishment of the Cape Lookout National Seashore in the State of North Carolina, and for other purposes,” (80 Stat. 33). Approved March 10, 1966.

Evacuated during the Civil War, Portsmouth never fully recovered its population or its economic vitality, and the customs house was abolished in 1867. As the population declined, the number of residences in the town dwindled as well, falling to fifty-nine in 1870 and forty-four by 1880. By the late nineteenth century, the shifting sands of the Outer Banks had closed Ocracoke Inlet to shipping, forcing a dwindling population to turn to fishing for its livelihood. Many buildings sat abandoned, including the marine hospital, which burned in 1894; those that survived hurricanes and a generally harsh environment were dismantled or relocated as the village slowly contracted. A hurricane in 1913 destroyed the Primitive Baptist and Methodist Churches. The community remained strong enough to support reconstruction of the Portsmouth Methodist Church by 1915, however.

On August 23, 1933, a moderate hurricane swept across Hatteras, bringing heavy rain but not particularly strong winds to Portsmouth. Less than one month later, a much stronger hurricane hit the area, with winds over 100 mph and torrential rain. Most of the island was flooded and many houses were destroyed. So much damage was done that most residents left the island to resettle on the mainland. In 1937, the Coast Guard (Life-Saving) Station was closed, and by 1940, there were only forty-two full-time residents; by 1950 that number stood at fourteen. The post office closed in 1959.

During this period, a number of the old buildings were adapted for temporary use by sport fisherman, especially after World War II. The Life-Saving Station, for example, was used as a sportsmen's club in the 1950s and 1960s. In the twentieth century, the availability of motorboats allowed commercial fishermen to reside on the mainland, leading to the decline of permanent settlement on the Outer Banks, but providing for increased access by recreational users.

In 1966, the Cape Lookout National Seashore was authorized "to preserve and enhance the natural character and recreational opportunities"² of the barrier island system. At that time, only a handful of permanent residents remained; those that were interested were offered life leases on their properties. With the death of the village's last

surviving male resident, Henry Pigott, in 1971, the only other full-time residents, Elma Dixon and her niece Marion Babb, left Portsmouth. Portsmouth Village was abandoned except for seasonal use by locals and park visitors.

Scope of Work

As discussed in the project scope of work developed by the NPS:

A CLR must establish preservation goals for a cultural landscape. The goals must be grounded in research, inventory, documentation, and analysis and evaluation of a landscape's characteristics and associated features. The content of a CLR provides the basis for making sound decisions about management, treatment, and use. Information about the historical development, significance, and existing character of a cultural landscape is also valuable for enhancing interpretation and maintenance.

Given the above-referenced general goals for CLRs, the specific scope for this project identified by the NPS in the statement of work included the following tasks:

1. Describe the historical development of the site;
2. Document the existing site conditions;
3. Provide analysis of the landscape's National Register significance;
4. Identify the site's character-defining features;
5. Determine an appropriate treatment strategy; and
6. Develop treatment recommendations that address resource preservation and park management concerns.

The NPS statement of work divides the CLR into two parts. Part 1 includes the Site History, Existing Conditions Documentation, and Analysis and Evaluation portions of the study. Part 2 is the Treatment component of the project. The two parts together comprise the complete CLR.

2. Ibid.

Project Methodology

The CLR for Portsmouth Village was prepared in accordance with the guidance offered in the most recent versions of various federal standards documents, including:

- *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*
- *NPS Director's Order No. 28: Cultural Resource Management Guideline* (Release 5)
- *NPS-77: Natural Resources Management Guidelines*
- *NPS-SER-82: Biotic Cultural Resources: Management Considerations for Historic Districts in the National Park System, Southeast Region*
- *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*
- *The Uniform Federal Accessibility Standard (UFAS) and Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)*
- *The National Park Service's Guiding Principles of Sustainable Design*
- *NPS-10: Preparation of Design and Construction Drawings*
- *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*
- *National Register Bulletin 30: Guidelines for Documenting and Evaluating Rural Historic Landscapes*

In addition, the methodology used by the project team members in preparing each component of this study is described in detail below.

Background Research and Data Collection. Prior to visiting the site in October 2006, CLR project team members began to collect documents and materials pertaining to the project and site. These included numerous studies, photograph collections, and maps and plans utilized in 2003 to prepare a CLR for

Cape Lookout Village Historic District. Additional materials were requested from the Technical Information Center at the NPS Denver Service Center. List of Classified Structures information was also secured for site resources from the NPS. In preparation for the field investigations, project personnel requested receipt of Geographic Information System (GIS) files from the park that would be sufficient for use in developing base maps for field inventory. GIS files and digital orthophoto quarter-quadrangle (DOQQ) information was provided by the park; the GIS files were not sufficient, however, to generate a base map of the site for field investigations, which was ultimately assembled from other sources (see below).

Start-up Meeting. On October 16, 2006, project team members from WJE and JMA met with park personnel at the park headquarters on Harkers Island to initiate work on the project. Those participating in the meeting included:

Cape Lookout National Seashore

- Robert Vogel, Superintendent
- Michael Rikard, Resource Management Specialist

Wiss Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc.

- Deborah Slaton, Project Manager and Architectural Historian
- Kenneth Itle, Project Architectural Historian

John Milner Associates, Inc.

- Liz Sargent, Project Manager and Historical Landscape Architect
- Bill Mauzy, Project Landscape Architectural Designer

At the meeting, the project team discussed local sources for obtaining historical information. Park personnel recounted recent changes to the village, such as the removal of many trees after recent storms, and stabilization and repair work implemented following Hurricane Isabel in 2003. The boundaries of the National Register Historic District were reviewed by the team. Due to the fact

that the National Register nomination provides limited guidance relative to the period of significance for the village, park personnel offered that they would like the CLR to provide a more clearly defined period of significance. They also suggested that the project team consider the National Historic Landmark eligibility of Portsmouth Village, particularly regarding the cultural landscape. The park also requested that the project team comment on the eligibility of the village under National Register Criterion D—Archeology.

Field Investigations. On October 17–18, 2006, WJE and JMA personnel conducted field investigations within Portsmouth Village. Local resident Rudy Austin provided boat transportation from Ocracoke Island to Portsmouth for the project team, where they joined NPS personnel. Chester Lynn accompanied Mr. Austin on the trip. These two gentlemen, who are personally familiar with the site, discussed the history of Portsmouth with the team during the trip.

Over the course of the two days of fieldwork, team members systematically documented the area included within the National Register historic district. Team members photographed primary and representative landscape features, both cultural and natural, and annotated copies of a base map, secured through the Technical Information Center, with observations relating to materials, condition, and information included on the base map that did not accurately reflect current conditions. The location and orientation of photographs were noted on the field maps, as were observations to be included in the existing conditions documentation chapter of this report.

Historical Landscape Documentation/Site Physical History. The site physical history was drafted upon review of all materials collected during the various research efforts. The important dates associated with physical events at Portsmouth were organized into a site history chronology. The site history chronology was then divided into a series of definable historic periods. Each period was illustrated through historical narrative, supplemented with period maps, photographs, and plans.

Base Mapping. An AutoCAD base map of the historic district was developed by tracing a 1997 high resolution aerial photograph of the island.

Shoreline boundaries were similarly derived from a 2005 medium-resolution satellite image. Information derived from aerial imagery was then reconciled with actual conditions as recorded during the site visit by the project team in October 2006. The historic district boundary was derived by tracing the “Portsmouth Historic Zone Base Map” provided by the NPS and verified using the boundary description included in the National Register nomination for the district.

Historic Period Plan Preparation. Historic period plans of the Portsmouth Village landscape were prepared to represent the site during phases of its evolution to the present. The team developed the historic period plans through registration of historic mapping sources with existing conditions information, so preparation of the existing conditions base map preceded work on the historical base maps. The project team then utilized primary source materials to create a skeletal map. Examples of the primary sources consulted to prepare the skeletal base map include historic aerial photographs, plats, coastal and park mapping, USGS mapping, and soil survey information. Through review of historic photographs and written descriptions of the landscape found in the research materials collected for the project, the team augmented the skeletal map to prepare five period plans representing key moments in the history of the village. Available secondary sources were also used to corroborate information and to generate queries for primary sources. Secondary sources were typically evaluated for their credibility and utilized with caution.

Existing Conditions Documentation. The documentation of existing conditions was developed through cross-referenced narrative, graphic, and photographic materials, organized in accordance with the framework established in National Register Bulletin 30: *Guidelines for Documenting and Evaluating Rural Historic Landscapes* that identifies various landscape characteristics for presenting existing conditions documentation information. The landscape characteristics utilized to describe the Portsmouth Village landscape include:

- Natural Systems and Features
- Responses to Natural Resources

- Topography and Topographic Modifications
- Patterns of Spatial Organization
- Land Uses
- Circulation
- Cultural Vegetation
- Buildings and Structures
- Views and Vistas
- Small-scale Features
- Archeological Resources

The existing conditions documentation was prepared through the compilation of information derived from existing conditions base mapping, field investigations, review of photographs taken in the field, and examination of park planning documents, park files, and other relevant cultural and natural resource documents received from NPS or acquired through research. Documents such as the soil survey of Carteret County proved invaluable in establishing a geographic and geologic context for the park and in understanding local conditions.

The existing conditions chapter includes photographs of representative landscape features. The photographs are referenced in the text. A documentation notebook containing all existing conditions documentation photographs and a set of maps indicating photographic station points was provided to NPS at the end of the project to supplement the representative photographic coverage included in this report.

The team also prepared an inventory of existing landscape features based on documentation of the site and an understanding of historic conditions. The inventory was utilized to ensure that each feature was discussed in the text, and served as the basis for condition assessments. The feature condition assessments were made using the categories suggested by the Cultural Landscapes Inventory Professional Procedures Guide: Good, Fair, Poor, and Unknown. These categories are defined as follows:

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within three to five years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character-defining elements will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

Unknown: not enough information is available to make an evaluation.

The condition ratings were annotated to include specific condition-related observations made in the field that help to justify the ratings.

Evaluation of Significance. The 1977 National Register nomination for the Portsmouth Village Historic District served as the preliminary basis for evaluating site significance. This information, as well as relevant National Register criteria and the guidance provided in National Register Bulletins 15 and 30, were taken into consideration in developing the CLR evaluation of significance. The CLR's comprehensive investigation into the history of the Portsmouth Village landscape suggested aspects, areas, and periods of potential significance beyond that afforded by the 1977 nomination. This CLR's supplemental evaluation information was incorporated into the preliminary discussion of significance included in the Analysis and Evaluation chapter. Also considered in conformance with the guidance offered in National Register Bulletins was the National Historic Landmark potential of the site, as well as an extension of the historic district's boundaries given investigation into the history of

the nearby associated residential enclaves at Middle Community and Sheep Island.

Comparative Analysis of Historic and Existing Conditions. To better understand the relationship between the existing park landscape and the character of the landscape during the identified periods of significance, the project team prepared a comparative analysis of historic and existing landscape conditions. The analysis focused on extant features and their dates of origin. The three primary goals of the comparative analysis were to:

1. Understand which features survive from the period of significance;
2. Establish the basis for an integrity assessment; and
3. Provide an understanding of the similarities and differences between historic and existing conditions that would contribute to the development of a well-grounded treatment plan for the cultural landscape.

Identification of Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources. Through the development of the comparative analysis of historic and existing landscape conditions, three lists were prepared that identify contributing, non-contributing, and missing features. Contributing features are those surviving from the period of significance; non-contributing features are those that originated after the period of significance; and missing features are those that are known or thought to have existed during the period of significance but that are no longer evident except possibly in the archeological record. Conjectural information was indicated as such within the lists.

Assessment of Integrity. The CLR summarizes the site's overall integrity and then assesses integrity in accordance with the seven aspects—location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association—described in National Register Bulletin 15: *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.

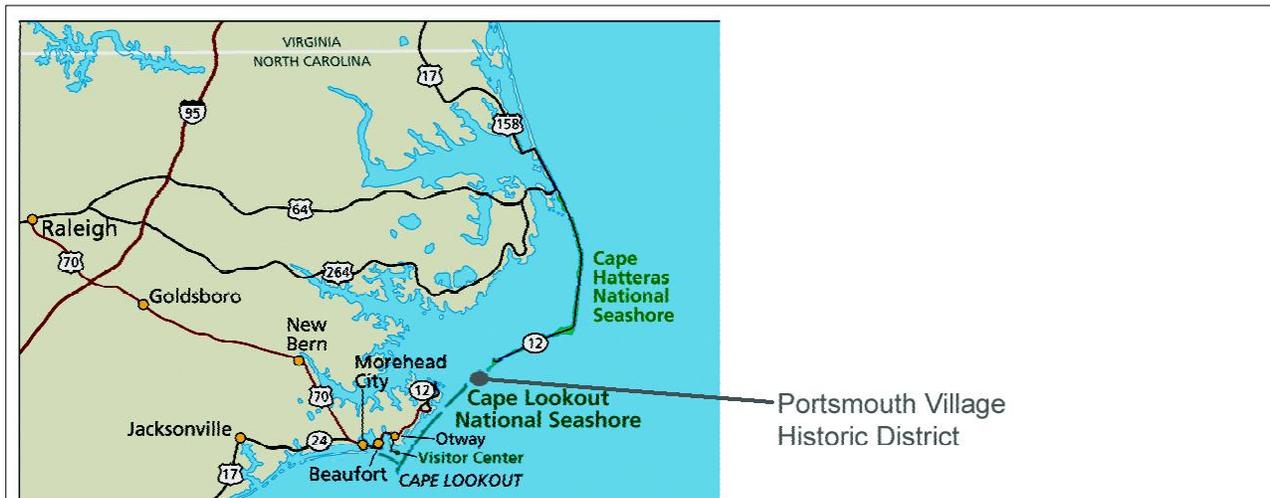
Treatment Plan. The treatment plan was based upon the guidance provided in the NPS project statement of work, the findings of each of the chapters represented herein, and additional specific guidance conveyed by park and regional NPS

personnel as part of the start-up meeting and during a conference call conducted in April 2007. A list of specific management concerns to be addressed was generated during the conference call. An overarching treatment approach was identified by the CLR team in support of the preservation and enhancement of the park's historic landscape character as well as its interpretation. This was followed by preparation of an overall treatment concept to direct treatment guidelines and recommendations. Guidelines and recommendations were then developed to respond to the NPS management issues and concerns, the condition assessments of site resources, and the results of the comparative analyses and integrity assessment.

Archeological Survey. During the project start-up meeting conducted at the park in October 2006, NPS personnel identified an interest in having the CLR team conduct limited archeological investigations on Portsmouth Island in support of this project. Over the course of the project, a scope of work was prepared to guide this effort, which ultimately included a walk-over survey of portions of the historic district and Middle Community and Sheep Island in the presence of knowledgeable local resident Chester Lynn. The results of the survey are conveyed in Appendix A in this document, and were utilized to inform the significance evaluation and treatment plan.

Description of Study Boundaries

See Fig. 1, Site Location and Context Map. Cape Lookout National Seashore forms a portion of North Carolina's Outer Banks in the easternmost portion of the state. To the east lies the Atlantic Ocean. Leeward are a series of named sounds, including Pamlico Sound, Core Sound, and Back Sound. The park's Visitor Center is located at the eastern tip of Harkers Island, reached via bridge from a peninsula located north of Beaufort, North Carolina. The park includes North and South Core Banks, with Portsmouth Village located at its northern end and Cape Lookout at its southern end. Also included within the park is Shackleford Banks, an island that extends west of Cape Lookout Lighthouse and edges Back Sound to the south of Harkers Island.



Source: National Park Service.



Portsmouth Village
Cape Lookout National Seashore, NC
Cultural Landscape Report
Map Prepared by John Milner Associates, Inc.

Figure 1.
Site location and context maps.

The focus of this CLR has been the documentation of the fifty-acre Portsmouth Village Historic District (Fig. 2) as indicated in the 1977 Portsmouth Village National Register nomination. The district encompasses the Life-Saving Station, Post Office and General Store, Portsmouth Methodist Church, Schoolhouse, and eighteen residences, as well as the boat landings that provide connections between water approaches and these cultural areas. The natural environment that knits these complexes together—creeks, marshes, and shrub savannahs—is also included within the study area and documented herein.

Moving in a clockwise direction from its northernmost point—the waterfront at Haulover Point—the historic district boundary extends southeast along the high tide line past the mouth of Doctor’s Creek and Coast Guard Creek for approximately 2,900 feet. The boundary then turns in a northwesterly direction and encompasses a spit of land before turning south and then west along the high tide line to a point 2,200 feet due south of the Post Office crossroads. The boundary then turns 45 degrees west of north for approximately 1,500 feet to the head of Warren Creek and follows the south bank of this tidal slough for about 1,000 feet to the center of the channel—Baymarsh Thorofare—between Sheep and Portsmouth Islands, which it follows to its northern end. The boundary then follows the high tide line on the northwest shore to meet the beginning point at Haulover Point.

Although the historic district boundary is the primary focus of the CLR, work developed on behalf of this study has suggested inclusion of the Middle Community and Sheep Island, adjacent areas that were formerly integral components of the Portsmouth Island community but are little represented today in the built environment. Additional investigation into the archeological information potential within these areas conducted on behalf of this CLR and by the NPS suggests that these areas should be considered for inclusion within the historic district boundary and merit consideration in the park’s interpretive program.

Summary of Findings

This CLR generally concurs with the findings of the 1977 National Register nomination for the Portsmouth Village Historic District regarding the areas and historic contexts for significance. The nomination, as is typical of the decade in which it was prepared, does not delineate a period of significance for the district that is bracketed by beginning and end dates. The CLR recommends a period of significance of 1753–1971 for consideration by the NPS to be utilized as part of any future nomination update; 1753 is the date at which the village was founded and 1971 is the date at which the last permanent residents left the village. The CLR recommends that the NPS consider expanding the boundary of the historic district to include the former Middle Community and Sheep Island settled areas. Although these areas do not retain integrity of above-ground resources, they were an important part of the community historically, and archeological information potential appears to exist that further supports their inclusion within the district.

The current historic district retains sufficient integrity to convey the important associations of its period of significance to the visitor. The majority of the cultural features extant today survive from the early to mid-twentieth century, and thus contribute to the significance of the district. The strong connections between the siting of buildings and structures and natural features and processes, historic use of materials, and sense of community dating from the early twentieth century, which built upon earlier developments that are no longer present, continue to be expressed in the surviving fabric of the historic district. Important visual and spatial connections also survive to a great degree.

The site lacks integrity, however, for the eighteenth and nineteenth century period of significance. Only a handful of buildings and structures survive from the nineteenth century, and none exist that were present during the eighteenth century. Additional investigations are needed to determine whether evidence of these earlier eras survives in the archeological record that may contribute to the information potential of the district.

Given the site’s high degree of integrity and the limited degree to which changes have been made to

the landscape since the end date of the period of significance, the CLR recommends preservation of as much of the district as possible. However, to address contemporary site management needs, rehabilitation is the overarching treatment approach identified for the district.

In addition to identifying a recommended treatment approach for the property, the CLR treatment plan addressed eight specific management issues discussed with the NPS during the project start-up meeting and a subsequent conference call. These issues included:

Historic leasing program for structures. There is interest in continued leasing of district buildings. The park may not be able to renew the leases and would not be able to expand the leasing program without addressing issues of water supply and sewage treatment. The NPS requested that the CLR comment on whether continuation of the leasing program is appropriate from a cultural resource perspective and consider means for addressing the water supply and sewage treatment issues without negatively impacting the historic district landscape.

New well. A new well has been proposed to address the water supply needs of on-going residential use within the district. The NPS requested that the CLR identify appropriate locations for the utility structures related to this new water system.

District boundaries. The National Register Historic District does not extend to the former settlements at Middle Community and Sheep Island. The NPS requested that the CLR discuss whether the historic district boundary should be expanded to include these areas and how interpretation of these settlements might be enhanced.

Access. The condition/location of the existing docks, access to the site, and measures to protect key features was to be considered by the CLR.

Threatened key features. The CLR team was asked to consider key landscape features likely to be negatively affected by storms or other natural forces, or by human actions in the future, and how such impacts can be mitigated.

Vegetation clearing. The CLR team was asked to determine what density of vegetation is appropriate for the village landscape.

Vegetation types. The CLR team was asked to consider whether tree species that are native to the area but are currently absent should be reintroduced, and how the twentieth-century pine plantations near the former airstrip should be treated.

Vegetation management. The CLR team was asked to recommend appropriate vegetation management strategies.

Hurricane impacts. Given the ongoing threat to the structures from hurricanes, the future maintenance of historic structures should be addressed. In particular, the CLR was to consider an appropriate approach for interpreting, stabilizing, rehabilitating, or reconstructing historic structures if damaged or destroyed by a hurricane.

To address these issues, the CLR recommends a conceptual approach for treatment that seeks to balance the protection and enhancement of the National Register district's historic integrity with contemporary park visitor access and interpretation responsibilities and sustainable land management practices. Many of the specific landscape treatment recommendations are intended to help convey the story of the island community by retaining as many historic features as possible, establishing aids to interpreting missing features, and managing natural resources and processes to ensure the ongoing integrity and interpretive value of the historic district.

Protection and repair of surviving historic buildings, structures, road corridors, and small-scale features, as well as vegetation and natural resource management, interpretation, and consideration of the overall visitor experience are the main focus of the treatment plan. In response to the NPS-generated management concerns, the treatment plan recommends perpetuation of the historic leasing program as a means for helping to maintain historic buildings and structures and retaining residential land uses. Locations for new water and sewer facilities are recommended for areas that can be visually screened and therefore do not interfere with key interpretive aspects of the cultural landscape. As noted earlier, the CLR also

recommends expansion of the historic district to encompass the Middle Community and Sheep Island areas of settlement that were integrally linked to the history of the village and likely possess good archeological information potential. Various approaches to mitigating the threat of hurricane damage to historic buildings are also presented, beginning with the need to carefully document all historic buildings and structures to the degree that they might be rebuilt if necessary.

The recommended approach to vegetation management supports a crucial interpretive goal at the park: enhancement of visual accessibility and maintenance or reinstatement of historic landscape character. Removal of many of the existing non-contributing woodland areas and consideration of the reestablishment of some historic vegetation communities, such as maritime forest species, are also recommended in the treatment plan.

The CLR also recommends weaving interpretation of all significant layers of history that have occurred on the site—including early settlement and the village’s role in lightering, the Marine Hospital, Life-Saving Station, Coast Guard, and commercial fishing industry—into the visitor experience.

To effect the specific treatment recommendations included in the plan, the CLR provides information to support implementation of the following eleven projects in priority order:

1. Stabilize and repair historic buildings and structures in fair and poor condition.
2. Stabilize and repair features associated with cemeteries.
3. Complete a comprehensive archeological survey of Portsmouth Island, Middle Community, and Sheep Island.
4. Prepare an interpretive plan.
5. Prepare a vegetation management plan.
6. Locate an appropriate site for the establishment of a new well.
7. Clear and thin non-contributing woody vegetation.

8. Interpret missing buildings and structures.
9. Restore the exterior appearance of contributing buildings and structures.
10. Repair and replace historic picket fencing.
11. Reestablish historic road alignments.

Recommendations for Further Research

Currently, the Marine Hospital cistern does not appear to be included on the List of Classified Structures. If this is the case, it should be added.

Historic Structure Reports should be prepared for the historic buildings of the village. Priority should be given to the public buildings of the village not already documented: the Portsmouth Methodist Church, the Schoolhouse, and the Post Office and General Store. Among the houses of the village, priority should be given to the Robert Wallace and Washington Roberts Houses (which date to the nineteenth century); any house where stabilization work is likely to be required in the near term; and houses such as the Dixon-Salter and Henry Pigott houses, which receive more intensive present-day use.

Consideration should be paid to updating the National Register nomination for the district to include Middle Community and Sheep Island. Due to the fact that most of the resources are no longer extant, inclusion will be primarily dependent on the archeological information potential of these areas.

More extensive archeological investigations should be undertaken. For example, systematic survey and testing should be conducted within the current historic district around places where structures are no longer standing, including the Marine Hospital and several houses indicated on maps that today are marked only by a few small brick piers, cisterns, and collapsed chimneys. An intensive systematic survey should also be completed for the Middle Community and Sheep Island areas of cultural development. The 1866 coastal survey is a particularly accurate document that could guide these investigations.

INTRODUCTION

Finally, additional personal interviews with descendants of the community and local residents with long-standing history within the region could yield important information about twentieth

century developments within the period of significance. In some cases, interviews might be conducted on site to help connect physical resources with the site's history.

- Post Office and General Store
- Old Straight Road
- Portsmouth Schoolhouse
- Warren Creek
- Former Middle Community
- Former Sheep Island community
- Doctor's Creek
- Portsmouth Methodist Church
- Portsmouth Life-Saving Station
- Coast Guard Creek
- Portsmouth Village Historic District Boundary



Not to scale.

Source: USGS Portsmouth, NC. Photorevised 1983.

Note: Sheep Island is mislabeled on the USGS map. Evergreen Island is the correct site of Sheep Island.



Portsmouth Village

Cape Lookout National Seashore, NC

Cultural Landscape Report

Map Prepared by John Milner Associates, Inc.

Figure 2.
Site map and study boundaries.

