

History of Rye's Built Environment

Housing Developments, Significant House Construction,

Government and other Public Buildings

and Businesses

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Six pages

Original Rye Roads

The pre- 20th century roads of Rye are as follows:

1600's - Washington, Brackett, Locke, Harbor, Sagamore and Pioneer (from Odiorne Pt. to Sagamore);

1700's - Central, Cable, Long John, South, Lang, Lafayette (Long Ln.) and Wallis

1800's - West, Garland, Grove, Fern, Clark, Sea, Concord Pt, Straws Pt., Perkins

1904 – Ocean Blvd.

These are the original roads of Rye prior to 1950, where the over 400 houses built before 1950 are still located today. Some of the dates those roads were laid out may be found in *History of Rye NH* by Langdon Parsons, 1905 in the library. The documentation on the majority of the old houses are contained in a separate document which will be sent on request.

- Mills – from the 1600's there were several mills on Rye waterways in the north and south end of town; up until the 1950's, the 1690's Jenness Mill on Red Mill Ln was still standing until it was demolished.

- Churches –The Methodist Episcopal church built in 1839 was sold to the town in 1873 and converted to the town hall. St Andrews Episcopal summer chapel on Church Rd. was built in 1876

- Small businesses – Mills and blacksmiths were the earlies businesses in town along with taverns. The first know stores began to crop up in the late 1700's and two in Rye center, 1805 and 1810, were prominent. Small Mom and Pop groceries and other businesses cropped up through the 1800's and were still the norm in the 1950's. Walker's General Store in Rye Center (1870-1969) is an example, Tate and Foss today.

- Boarding Houses and Hotels - The Philbrick family moved their farmhouse across the road, enlarged it, and opened it as the Atlantic House at end of Central road in 1846; eight others followed in the next three decades including the Farragut and Ocean Wave which lasted until after the mid-20th century. Drake House Hotel (now

apts.) and Rye Beach Inn (now private home) are all that remain of those buildings today. Thirty to forty farmhouses also served as boarding houses and most of them remain today.

There have dozens of conversions of private homes into businesses and sometimes back to private homes.

Housing Development including clusters of houses

Some dates and names of housing developments are estimates; there are several single-family homes that have very long driveways, deep into the back lands. Although almost two thirds of Rye is either fresh or salt water marsh, there are still many areas that can be developed. This history is an effort to provide a perspective on our built environment so that better planning (i.e. cluster development, etc.) and increased land conservation may create a healthier balance between the natural world and the human world.

Any contributions to improving the accuracy of this document are welcome.

The original version of this document was presented to the public in an RCL program in November 2018 entitled: "Rye: the Last 50 Years and the Next 50 Years."

1850 - 1920

- Locke's Neck: Rye's first development started on Locke's Neck beginning in 1850's. Called the Straws Pt community, after the circle of mostly mansard roof houses had filled the circle by the water, it expanded further inland on Straws Pt. Rd.
- 1873 - Methodist church converted to town hall
- Central Cemetery: opened in 1893
- 1899-1925 – trolley ran through Rye from Sag. Rd, Wallis, Wash., Central
- Parsons Pt, (the Concord Pt. community), Concord Pt. Rd., late 1800's
- Jenness Beach district – beginning in 1903 on either side of Ocean Blvd., from north of Cable Rd. (Atlantic Ave) to south of Perkins Rd. (Highland Dr.) This district was stimulated by construction of Ocean Blvd. 1902-04. In his Rye history Langdon Parsons notes, with regret, the development of this area, because for the previous thirty years it had been the Ocean House Picnic Grove on the ocean.
- Abenaki Golf Club: established 1903
- Rye Beach Village District: established in 1905; first Rye Beach substantial house built in 1890's; after 1905, more intense building of such houses.

- cul de sac, early 1900's, just south of Parsons (Stinky) Creek bridge, off Ocean Blvd., several houses built along the edge of Wallis Sands marsh

1911 – Rye Public library opens

1920 – 1945

- Rye Beach Village District building and PO opened in 1919

- many businesses sprouted up including Ocean Blvd stores such as Carberrys, Sandpiper, Red Roof as well as motels and tourist cabins and restaurants such as Saunders at Rye Harbor and Rays Seafood and the Salty Breeze Snack Bar at Foss Beach. And Dinnemans at Wallis Sands

- Manchester Colony, (1920's) off Wallis Road, near Wallis Sands salt marsh; Park Ridge Ave. etc.

- Fairhill manor, beginning in 1920's - housing north of Wallis Sands Beach, north to Polluck Dr., inland to and crossing Parsons Rd., a very dense grid of intersecting roads; today this housing extends north to Tuna Dr.

- Foyes Cor. Area - between the wars, Foyes and Frontier roads, Frontier Rd., etc.

- 1934 – Rye Consolidated School opens for all students (replaces burned Wedgwood school); East South and West schools became private homes

- 1936: NH state legislature grants exclusive zoning to Rye Beach Village District – they may pass more restrictive zoning than the rest of the town

- late 1930's: significant house construction on existing roads and developments due to population

growth from military build-up in region.

1942 – town votes to have planning and zoning boards

1943 – town votes out planning and Zoning

1945 - 1980

- Fern Ave, Perkins Rd – example of existing roads with no new houses until after WWII when they filled up fast. Each road had an historic house that either burned or was demolished after the war

- 1952 – Planning and Zoning boards established

- 1954: first fire/police station opened in center

- 1950's: Huntervale Ave (Central at Cable Rd.)
- 1950's: Mt. View Terrace (next to Webster's at Rye; nicknamed "Moodyville" after the developer;
(residents are still trying to see the mountains.)
- 1956: Rye Elementary School opens; Rye school becomes RJH
- cul de sac, off Washington Rd., opposite fire station, three houses
- 50's - Adams Park, trailer park, later modular housing; off Lafayette Rd
- 3rd Congregational church burns; new one opens 1961
- Harborview Dr., off Wentworth Rd
- c. 1960: court room established at town hall
- 1960 – Ocean Wave hotel burns
- 1960's: Old Parish Rd. built for purposes of locating, at the bottom of the hill, the large farmhouse moved from beside town hall
- 1964 – 1st National Bank of Portsmouth built in Rye Center
- 1960's – extension of Harbor Rd, beyond the breakwater for new houses on ocean
- 1960's: Acorn Acres, off Wallis Rd.
- Odiorne Dr., off Wallis just east of Brackett
- 1970's: Alheson/Tehias Rd. (Tahlton Woods), off Wallis Rd.;
- Recreation Rd. off Locke Rd.
- 1975 – Farragut hotel and adjacent buildings demolished
- 1977: Rye recycling and DPW established off Grove Rd. replacing nearby old dump
- Meadow Dr – opposite Cemetery off Central

c. 1980 – c. 2000

Note – This twenty-year span saw more houses built in town than during any other epoch, including 31 housing developments. There was so much construction that a temporary moratorium was set c. 1980, but the building continued unabated after that, sometimes over 50 in a year in new developments and along existing roads.

Because of deregulation, speculation in land and houses and flipping houses to make a quick profit the 1980's saw the beginning of a national escalation in the value of land and houses. The developments listed here are from the northern part of town toward the southern end.

- Stoneridge Dr., cul de sac – off Sagamore Rd to the right, just before Foyes Roundabout
- Wentworth golf course housing development, off Pioneer Rd
- Venture Ave, off Pioneer Rd.
- Berry's Brook – off Sagamore Rd
- Morgan Ct, off Sagamore Rd.
- Forest Green, off Sagamore Rd.
- Young Dr., off Long John Rd, nr. Lang's Cor.
- Rands Ln., cul de Sac, off Wallis Rd., nr. Brackett
- Libby Ln., off Washington Rd., nr. Long John
- Colburn Dr., off Washington Rd. nr. Brackett
- La Mer Dr., off Washington Rd., no. of Brackett
- Winslow Way, cul de sac, off Wash. Rd. nr. Ocean Blvd.
- Rock Orchard, off Wallis Rd nr. Lang's Cor.
- Liberty Common, off Wallis Rd (22 houses 1984-86)
- Merrymeeting Ln., extension of Old Parish Rd.
- along and off Straws Point Rd.
- Foss Circle, off Old Beach Dr.
- Fielding Way, off Cable Rd. – Rand Springs
- McGlaughlin Dr/Pine St to Cable, off Central Rd. nr. Perkins
- Wayside Dr., off Washington Rd., nr. center
- Hunter's Run off Washington Rd. nr. Fern Ave
- Stonewall Ln., off Fern Ave.
- Birchwood Dr., off Washington Rd. south of West Rd

- Birchwood Dr., off Wash. Rd. south of West Rd.
- Burnette Dr. off Wash. Rd. nr Dow Ln
- Mast Ln., off Dow Ln
- Random Rd., off Washington Rd., nr. Lafayette Rd.
- Fairway Dr., off South Rd nr. Central
- Lawrence Ln., off South, nr. Fairway Dr.
- Maple Dr., nr. Lawrence Ln.
- cul de sac off South Rd, nr. Where it turns to North Rd. in No. Hampton.
- 1995 – Stoneleigh Manor (hotel, college, air academy, Franciscan Retreat house) demolished
- 1997,98 – large additions to Rye Junior High and Rye Public Library

Since c. 2000 or just before

Note – the escalating value of land and buildings continued unabated until the crash of 2008, but has more than rebounded in Rye to where in 2020 a 1.5-acre house lot can go for \$500,000 and up. The average value of a house in Rye in 2020 is

The escalating value of land and the desire to live in Rye, has caused an increasing number of demolitions c. 2010 – 2020; most of these have been post war houses, but some have been historic such as the two houses and barns on South nr Woodlawn recently demolished.

The Rye Heritage Commission was established in 2011 for the purpose of receiving and managing historic properties and overseeing the architectural heritage of the town’s-built environment. The non- profit Rye Historical Society is also interested in this preservation of pre 1950 houses and is working on an old house documentation project. Between 2000 and 2020 the town voted for three open space bonds for the purposes of land conservation. Better public education is needed on how residents may take advantage of this alternative to housing development of selling easements on their land.

- 2002 – Rye Town Museum opens adjacent to library
- 2004 – White Horse Farms, off Washington Rd. nr. Grove Rd. - .17 houses?
- 2005 – new fire/police station
- Airfield Dr. – off Lafayette Rd., Cedar Rd.?

- Sea Grass Ln. (former Rand Lumber), off Wallis, c. 2015
- Starfish Cir., off Brackett, between Wallis and Clark, c. 2016
- 2017 – Cedar Rd., off South nr. West Rd., 5 houses
- 2019 - Signature Dr. to Autumn Ln. off South Rd., nr. Woodland Rd. – c. 15 houses
- 2020 - between Harbor and Locke, on edge of saltmarsh, four houses