

HISTORY OF CREATION OF ORIENT HISTORIC DISTRICT

“A house or a community shouldn’t be a museum. All these properties should change and evolve over time, but the community should have a say in how its shared resource is managed. Property values are affected, ambience is affected, and our history is affected. It’s like taking away pieces of a puzzle. Too many, and you have no pattern left”.

John Green, Southold Town Landmark Preservation Commission Chairman, ORIENT HISTORIC DISTRICT HOUSE STRIPPED TO A SKELETON
Suffolk Times, Nov. 11th, 1999.

The idea of petitioning to have the hamlet of Orient officially recognized as a historic district was first proposed to the board of directors of the Oysterponds Historical Society in 1973.

Local residents showed significant interest so the Society allocated funds to begin the process of applying for and gaining state and national recognition.

Representatives of the hamlet met with officials of NYS Department of Parks and Recreation to agree on specific boundaries of the proposed district. It was agreed that the district should encompass the built-up section of the hamlet which included homes built in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Many of the homes had been subjected to few changes during that period, up to the present time.

The next step was to categorize every home in the outlined district. This was a labor-intensive effort requiring many hours of volunteer effort. Workers inspected homes, noted unique features, and described them in detail on myriad required national and state forms. More than 100 homes were reviewed in this manner.

Finally, in October of 1974 the completed documentation was sent to the NYS Office of Parks and Recreation for review and approval. That approval came two years later, in 1976, when the volunteer group was notified that their petition was accepted by the NYS Board for Historic Preservation, and that an application would be sent to the Department of the Interior, National Register of Historic Places. Notification was received in Orient on May 21st 1976, that they were officially entered on the National Register.

Courtesy of
Edward Webb, Commissioner
Historic Preservation Commission
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