

# Architectural Styles

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Rough dates for these houses are from the mid-1600s to the early 1700s. Many of the houses have shingle exteriors. Shingles for siding probably started with the Dutch on Long Island in the mid-17th Century. Wood siding such as shingles was an American feature because of the bounty of wood in the colonies and the excellence of wood as an insulator.

Since Saybrook was originally settled in the 17th Century, it is natural to see these survivors of its beginnings. door facade. lean-to rear addition, and five window and center large center chimney, the



There are at least four 17th Century “saltbox” houses in Old Saybrook. Distinguishing features are the large center chimney, the lean-to rear addition, and five window and center door facade.

As you view the houses from the streets of Old Saybrook, you will have an opportunity to compare and appreciate their various architectural styles; we encourage you to familiarize yourself with their distinguishing characteristics.

“Federal” houses abound in Old Saybrook. The birth of the nation and its government modeled on Greek Democracy, created an interest in Greek temple architectural forms. Columns, fan lights, fireplaces, and corner cupboards were rendered classical by American carpenters. Many of the “Federal” houses moved the facade to the gable end

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The three double chimney “Georgian” houses on Main Street are evidence of early prosperity in Old Saybrook. With the same nine-window facade, center doorway and clapboard exterior, the double chimney provided for a center hallway, a stairway with access to each second floor room and better air circulation. Also, the center hall provided for more formality in the reception of guests and strangers.

Of more generous proportions than the “saltbox,” these houses were built with the center chimney still acting as a central heating unit. The fireplaces in practically every room are part of the chimney. The facade has nine windows and a center doorway. The exterior is covered with clapboards, the descendant of the medieval European weatherboards, but again providing protection from the harsh New England winters. These houses were built during the 18th and early 19th Century.

built after the “saltbox” and spanned the period of the English Kings named George.

By the late 1840s, enthusiasm for all things Greek declined in the United States. In Old Saybrook, eclectic, a composite of styles in one house abounds. This is sometimes called Victorian Bay windows, vertical board exteriors, and intricate carpentry were popular. These and other innovations manifested themselves in the porches, under the eaves, and in the roof peaks as shown in this house. A large number and variety of Victorian houses may be found in Old Saybrook. From the seashore eclectic of Fenwick, to the mansard “modernizing” of a house on Main Street, to the Gothic Revival of the Grace Episcopal parsonage, the word is variety. Variety best describes the architecture of the Victorian age here. The styles dated from about 1836 to 1900.



Chuches and public buildings became Greek temples. “Federal” and “Greek Revival” seem to be two phrases describing the same architectural movement in the United States. These houses in Old Saybrook date from shortly after the Revolutionary War to about 1850.

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in many cases, were added to earlier houses.

The Town of Old Saybrook is one of the earliest settlements in Connecticut and, indeed, in the United States. Its first center was the site of Fort Saybrook at Saybrook Point. Over time, the center of the town moved toward what is now the Main Street commercial center.

Generally, those who are interested in the history of the town will be drawn to the relics of the past which are in abundance here: the old houses and buildings. The architectural styles are varied; however, there are more 18th Century colonial and 19th Century federal buildings than you will find in many New England towns.

The tour draws attention to what is left of the old buildings on Main Street. Some buildings that have an obviously early date are not included because we lack sufficient detail at this time. Please visit the Old Saybrook Historical Society located in the General William Hart House at 350 Main Street, Old Saybrook. Hours vary; please call 860 388-2622, or check their website at [www.oldsaybrook.com/history](http://www.oldsaybrook.com/history).

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Kristen Roberts *President* Judy Sullivan *Executive Director*

The numbers on the map correspond to the buildings that are numbered in the text. Please note that the majority of the buildings are private residences and, as such, are not open to visitors.

These buildings are a part of Old Saybrook’s irreplaceable history. More detailed information on the history of the Old Saybrook Colony and the town of Old Saybrook is available from the Municipal Historian and from the Old Saybrook Historical Society.

The Old Saybrook Historical Society is pleased to collaborate with the Old Saybrook Chamber of Commerce on this walking tour guide.

Old Saybrook is the oldest town on the shoreline and one of the first towns in Connecticut. It was founded in 1635 by a handful of hearty men and women who survived several years of hardship to establish Saybrook Colony. The original Saybrook land grant included Old Lyme, Chester, Essex, Deep River, Westbrook, and Old Saybrook. Eventually these areas broke into separate townships.

By 1750, Old Saybrook had become a thriving community largely because of its river location. A small ship building industry was developed here and a booming coastal and West Indian shipping trade enhanced the town’s prosperity. Wealthy sea captains, ship owners and merchants built lovely homes along the main thoroughfares of town. Unfortunately many have been “lost to progress.” One of the remaining homes, the General William Hart House (1767) is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and it is the headquarters for the Old Saybrook Historical Society, a not for profit, all volunteer organization. We are dedicated to preserving, protecting and promoting the history of Old Saybrook.

Please visit the Hart House, heritage gardens and Archive building on your walking tour, (contact [www.saybrookhistory.org](http://www.saybrookhistory.org) for exhibits, events & hours).

**OLD SAYBROOK CHAMBER of COMMERCE**

## Walking Tour

Railroad Station to the Millstone via Main Street

**Old Saybrook Chamber of Commerce**  
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# Old Saybrook Walking Tour

## Main Street – Railroad Station to the Millstone



Ingham House

### 1. Railroad Station

In 1855, the land was sold to the New Haven and New London RR.Co. A part of the present station was constructed at that time. c. 1870, the station took its present appearance. The most notable architectural feature is the overhang of the roof.

### 2. Upper Cemetery

This cemetery was laid out in 1787 by the proprietors of the town commons. In the 19th Century, the common area was an important meeting place for the townspeople.

### 3. Edward Sanford House - 15 North Main Street.

c 1815 This shows unusually fine Greek Revival features. Doric pilasters are formed over the corner posts and dentil work is on the cornice and over the front door. There is a delicate fan window in the front pediment. The builder was a descendent of Zacharia Sanford, witness when Indian Sachem Uncas deeded the land to the town's early settlers.

### 4. Coulter House - Route 1 and Main Street.

A 1853 map shows this building as the house of H. Kirkland. The estate was sold to James Coulter in 1864. All indications are that the building has been used as an inn since 1859.

### 5. Ambrose Whittlesey House - 14 Main Street.

Built in 1799 by Capt. Ambrose Whittlesey, a sea captain. The Georgian proportions are typical of the center chimney and double chimney houses of the 18th Century. The Whittlesey family was responsible for founding the library and other town institutions. In 1919, the house came into the possession of Miss Grace Pratt; the last surviving member of the Ambrose Whittlesey family.



Hefflon House

### 6. Hefflon House - 48 Main Street

c. 1800, charming ½ Cape with additions. Dentil moldings, dutch door, and 6 over 9 pane windows. Remained in the Hefflon family until 1920's.

### 7. Burns and Young - 50 Main Street.

Constructed in 1905 where the Burns and Young market was located. This was one of the major stops for the New London/New Haven Trolley.

### 8. Ingham House - 56 Main Street.

An octagonal (8 sided) prefab building purchased and constructed c. 1890 from the Sears and Roebuck Catalog and is the only one of its kind in the area.

### 9. Elihu Ingham House - 65 Main Street

c. 1795. This is one of the few original buildings remaining on Main Street from the 18th century in the commercial section of town. Gambrel roof and classic porticos flanking the front door are evidence of its early origin. Ell at the rear also appears to be early. Structure used as a residence until 1960's.



Elihu Ingham House

### 10. Dr. Elisha Ely House - 163 Main Street.

This c. 1783 house is one of the few gambrel roof center chimney homes of the 18th century left in Old Saybrook. The entrance porch is a later addition, but the frame is probably close to the original. The center window on the second floor is an original 6 over 9. Dr. Ely had a hospital for a "communicating the small pox" inoculation in 1781.

### 11. Strokes' Brothers Building - 274 & 276 Main Street.

c. 1900. Originally, this brick building housed Strokes' Brothers Store. They ran their business for 33 years; it was one of the original department stores in the area.

### 12. 286 Main Street.

It is believed this building dates back to pre-revolutionary times because of the beautiful chestnut pegged beams. Originally, it was a school with a blacksmith shop in the rear. During the early 1900s it was known as the Gilt Edge, had a gas pump, pool room, as well as a hamburger and soda shop. It was the only place from New Haven to New London open 24 hours daily.

### 13. Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center - 300 Main Street.



Katharine Hepburn Cultural Arts Center

Built in 1905 as a community theater, remodeled into the Town Hall in 1963, and in 2009, restored back to its original use as a cultural arts center.

### 14. Town Hall - 302 Main Street.

This building was the site of a wooden schoolhouse built in the 1880s. The original section, the peaked roof section facing Main Street, was bricked up in 1936 and two large wings added. It was again transformed and enlarged in 2004 to house Town government and recreation facilities.

### 15. J. Shipman House - 322 Main Street.

c. 1836 The proportions are Greek revival; especially characteristic is the slope of the roof, which is more gradual than the earlier colonial architecture. Further evidence of the early 19th century is the square attic window and the porticos framing the front door. The front porch was a later addition.

### 16. Humphrey Pratt Tavern - 287 Main Street.

This structure c. 1785 remained in the same family until 1943. It was a stage stop on the run between New Haven and Boston and served as the first Post Office. Notable architectural features include the ballroom housed in the ell, which has a spring floor to facilitate dancing and accommodates a graceful blending of the gambrel roofed ell with the double chimney of the main building.

### 17. Samuel H. Pratt House - 334 Main Street.



Samuel Pratt House

Though not as ornate as some houses of this 1874 era, the ornamental detail under the eaves, on the porch, and the large windows help establish visual contact with nature; yet the house retains the hint of Greek revival that was common to 19th century architecture.

### 18. James Ingraham House - 305 Main Street.

This c. 1811 house appears to be a Georgian half house. The window proportions and placement and the slope of the roof are Georgian while the other half appears to be a classic through hall double chimney house.

### 19. Grace Episcopal Church - 338 Main Street.

The present church was constructed in 1872 and is best described as English Country style. The arches and flying buttresses are examples of Gothic characteristics, which lend the look of a miniature medieval cathedral.

### 20. Rectory for Grace Episcopal Church - 338 Main Street.

The c. 1873 home is a copy of a house seen in England by Rev. Jesse Heald. The exterior details are unusual to this area and perhaps to this country. Most notable are the Gothic windows in the front dormer underneath on the second floor. The front porch has unusual woodwork to adorn the rail and columns.



Coulter House

### 21. Gen. William Hart House - 350 Main Street (Old Saybrook Historical Society).

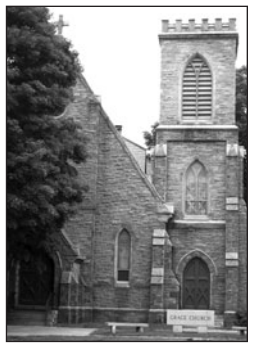
William Hart, Jr. built this home for his bride, Esther Buckingham in 1767. Hart served in the Revolutionary War and reached the rank of General. Later, he was a candidate for Governor of Connecticut. The house has typical twelve over twelve windows, center hallway, and twin chimneys. Also, corner chimneys are a unique feature. The interior has wide floor boards, old wainscoting and paneling. The house has been restored to its original authenticity by the Old Saybrook Historical Society, which uses it as a headquarters and museum.



Gen. William Hart House

### 22. Congregational Church - 366 Main Street.

This is the fourth church building of the Saybrook Congregation. The first two were at Saybrook Point and the third opposite. The present building was constructed in 1840 and the architecture reflects that of Greek revival. The general proportions of the Columns and the fluted pilaster are all of classic style. The sides were built flat on the ground and then lifted by a team of 20 oxen and placed in deep troughs uprighting the entire side; it was one of the first prefab churches in the country.



Grace Episcopal Church

### 23. Humphrey Pratt Tavern Store - 2 Pennywise Lane at Main Street.

A 19th Century construction date can be assumed by the twelve over twelve windows. Tradition says that General Lafayette made a purchase at the store when it was at the corner of Old Boston Post Road and Main Street. By 1874, the building was moved to its present location. The building is probably the most well known as the pharmacy owned by Miss Anne L. James, the first black woman pharmacist in Connecticut.

### 24. Deacon Timothy Pratt House - 325 Main Street.

c. 1746 The center chimney, clapboards, and rear gambrel roof all reflect its colonial origin. For many years, this house was known as the Treadway Place.

### 25. P.L. Shephard House - 341 Main Street.

The low ceilings and through hall arrangement inside the house, as well as the geometric arrangement of the front windows, indicate colonial architecture. The mansard roof and ornate eyebrow dormers indicate later alterations, probably about the time the structure was used as the Seabury Institute c. 1875.



Humphrey Pratt Tavern Store

The architecture, exclusive of the dormer remodeling, indicates c. 1687 construction. The Cheesebrough map shows a house in this area in 1755 and the name John Shipman.

### 27. Joseph Buckingham House - 412 Main Street.

The owners believe it was built in the late 17th Century, supported by the architectural style. It has the general proportions of a lean-to saltbox, but the windows are of an 18th Century colonial.

### 28. W.E. Clark House - 363 Main Street.

This house was built between 1859 and 1874. The bay windows emphasize the utility of space. The overhang of the roof and the exposed rafters in the overhang are a decided trademark of the stick style construction of that period.

### 29. William J. Clark House - 369 Main Street.

Built c. 1838, shows Greek revival characteristics in the arrangement of the windows, the slope of the roof, and the placement of the front door. The shingles were a later addition. The sunrise attic windows seem characteristic of homes along the Connecticut shoreline. This is the same house where the remains of Lady Fenwick were taken in 1870, after being exhumed at Saybrook Point to make room for the railroad.



John Shipman House

### 30. Justin B. Holman House - 381 Main Street.

An early deed shows this property on the 1874 map. Evidence shows the projecting rafters under the overhanging roof, and in general, the proportionately high wall to width indicates the high ceilings of the late 19th century.



P.L. Shephard House

### 31. Gregory W. Denison House - 385 Main Street.

This house incorporates some of the essential features of the stick style characteristic of the late 19th century. The overhanging roof has some intricate carpentry work that blends the house with the landscape. Other features which were departures from earlier homes are the complex detail around the roof porch and vertical battens in the outside walls.

### 32. Samuel Hart House - 395 Main Street.

Built c. 1773 by Samuel Hart, brother of Gen. William Hart, Elisha Hart, and Amelia Hart Hotchkiss, all children of Rev. William Hart. The center chimney construction is typical of the colonial era. Some interior rooms have the original paneled walls.

33. S. Kirtland House - 425 Main Street. Built in the late 18th century, the architectural features indicate a Georgian half house. The slope of the roof and the regularity of the windows are two such features. The front porch and chimney are later additions.

### 34. William B. Tully House - 488 Main Street.

The aspect of this home shows what Vincent Scully described as "poignant American longing to recall its 18th century past." The exception to that longing reflects in the regular arrangement of windows and door with its overhanging eaves. This is characteristic of the stick style.

### 35. Samuel Eliot House - 500 Main Street.

Built c. 1737 by Samuel Eliot. In the mid-18th century, it was occupied by Capt. Stowe. The next occupant was a prosperous trader who is said to have engaged in slave trade. Capt. Newell, married to Stowe's daughter, was killed by slaves in the Cape Verde Inlands in 1819. This is a good example of double chimney colonial architecture.

### 36. The Millstone.

The Millstone is the last relic of the windmill built by the early settlers under the direction of Lion Gardiner in 1636. It stood here for 175 years.



Deacon Timothy Pratt House

