This thesis examines the historic and architectural significance of Byram Shore, a mile-long waterfront community located at the south-westernmost tip of Connecticut in Greenwich. The neighborhood is part of an important history concerning the summer migration of wealthy New Yorkers to the outlying suburbs in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These summer retreats evolved into increasingly permanent residences over time as highways and railroads connected country to city in the first half of the twentieth century. Byram Shore was a prime location due to its natural beauty and previously undeveloped land with waterfront along the Long Island Sound to the south and the Byram River to the north.

When the land was first developed in the late nineteenth century, the landowners established grand estates comprised of large mansions and multiple service structures, such as carriage houses and boathouses. During the post-World War II period, many local and nationwide influences led to the subdivision of the land and demolition of some of its architectural resources. This subdivision coupled with a nationwide housing shortage and new fashion for modest homes led to the unfortunate demolition of some of the great estates, which were each replaced with multiple residences built in modern styles. In recent years, the desirability of waterfront property in the vicinity of Manhattan has further threatened the neighborhood’s historic fabric. Several important structures have been demolished recently, only to be replaced with houses that do not consider issues of scale or stylistic appropriateness. However, there remain many important vestiges of the neighborhood’s early development that currently serve to remind us of the history of this area. Many of the original mansions still stand and the majority of the neighborhood’s carriage houses, which are in keeping with the architectural styles of the houses they once served, are extant, and now function as single-family residences.

Drawing upon the current preservation framework of the town of Greenwich and the state of Connecticut, as well as mechanisms employed in similar contexts throughout the New York City region, the thesis presents recommendations for the optimal stewardship of Byram Shore. These recommendations are informed by a broader discussion of New York area waterfront communities through a case study analysis that considers and identifies the threats they face and the diversity of efforts to preserve them. The analysis also serves to illustrate the potential for this regional network to learn from and work with each other toward the common goal of preserving their character and significant historical contribution. Placed within this context and armed with the tools provided by this study, the thesis illuminates the feasibility and importance of the preservation of Byram Shore.