The pediment often included a half-round window known as a fanlight and dentil trim—a repeating tooth-shaped pattern along the edge.

Italianate architecture—dating from about 1840 to 1890—is the most recent style represented on the street. It is distinct for a very shallow-pitched roof with fanciful brackets under the eaves. The cornice, or trim just under the roof, is exaggerated & elaborate, sometimes inset with small windows. The primary windows of the Italianate home are tall and narrow.

Due to various tastes & styles through the ages, many different architectural styles may be visible in individual houses.

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South to North Along Gravel Street

#3. The “Case Bottle House,” is so-called because its shape resembles the old cases in which bottles of liquor were shipped. Built between 1809 and 1815 by John Wolfe as a one-family house, it had undergone many additions and alterations through the years until its restoration in 1951. While now a commercial property, it retains the look of the square-shaped original home.

#5. Since 1914 this has been home to the First Church of Christ Scientist. It was built by Capt. George Wolfe sometime between 1815 and 1827 when it was sold to his brother-in-law, Capt. William Kemp. Kemp commanded a number of sloops and schooners until his death in 1840. The building remained in the Kemp family until purchased by the church.

#7. Until its recent sale, this building was the meeting place of the Charity and Relief Masonic Corporation. It was built in 1911-12 on land donated by Allen Avery, a prominent businessman whose West Main Street building housed a furniture business and advertised coffins and mortuary services.

#9. Capt. George Wolfe built this typical Cape Cod dwelling in 1818 for his bride. Much the same now, as then, it boasts a huge central chimney that contains three fireplaces. The largest, or kitchen, fireplace contains the traditional oven. The west wing is added later. The characteristics of the Gothic Revival- scrollwork, finials, crockets and pointed arches- were easily applied to an existing building. Look closely at the doorway, though, and you will see the original Greek Revival pilasters and cornice of 1835.

#11. This old Cape Cod was built around 1812 by Capt. Avery Brown, who commanded the sloop Minerva and was Bo’sun on “Hero”. A 47-foot sloop, the Hero was built in 1800 at the Packard Shipyard in Mystic and became famous in the War of 1812. In 1820, she was the vessel in which Nathaniel Palmer of Stonington, CT discovered Antarctica while on a sealing voyage.

#13. Built about 1836, this house by tradition is known as a “spite house,” deliberately constructed into the street in order to block the neighbor’s view. Basically a Cape Cod, it has two central chimneys and Greek Revival accents. Originally owned by John Fellow (who must have been the spiteful one), it was later the residence of two Captains Eldredge, both of whom went to sea in various capacities. George Eldredge Jr. (son of George-#2 Eldridge Street and the brother of Thomas-#31 Gravel Street and Elam also #2 Eldridge Street) was the first captain of the Shoreline Ferry connecting Groton and New London, a job later held by his son George H. A circa 1900 photo shows the house with a two-level porch, since removed.

#15. This was a Greek Revival built in 1835 by a cabinetmaker, Daniel D. Edgecomb, who made coffins in his basement shop. Its Italian Villa style additions were made by Captain Gordon Gates who purchased the house in 1847. Gates distinguished himself by making a record run around the Horn in the famous clipper ship, “Twilight”, in 1866. The oldest of four brothers, he taught George, Nathan and Isaac to sail and all went on to become Mystic captains.

#19. The “newest” house on Gravel Street (it replaced one built in 1844), was constructed in the Italian Villa style in 1861 by Capt. John A. Williams. The previous year he had made a record run New York to San Francisco in 89 days, 4 hours in the clipper ship “Andrew Jackson”, beating the famous “Flying Cloud” designed by Donald McKay. The Jackson was built in Mystic at the Irons and Grinnell Shipyard.

#21. This is an elegant Greek Revival featuring a gable pediment, corner pilasters and cornice trim beneath the roof. The porch with columns, cornices and scroll-trimmed railings was added at the turn of the century and was recently renovated. Built in 1840 by Elisha Denison, this house became a sea captain’s house when acquired by Martin Smith in 1834. Smith commanded the ships “Niagara”, “Simoon” and “Selma”.

#23. Another traditional Greek Revival, this house was presumably built in 1837 by its owner John Gallup, who was a carpenter and builder; though it is not clear that it is his work. Over time, additions, including Italianate features such as bay windows and porches, changed the facade of this house. In the 1970’s the house was restored to its original appearance.

#27. This house is sideways to the street, perhaps for the convenience of customers of its owner, Daniel R. Williams, who had a seine fishing net business in the basement. At the time that it was built, in 1834, there were no other houses for some way south of it, assuring an unobstructed view down the river. An outbuilding in the rear was a station on the Underground Railroad. Its basement, 10 ft. deep, with cupboards and benches, hid the runaway slaves. Matilda Appleman Williams held weekly séances in the front parlor. Note the handsome front door with leaded sidelights.