Form 10-300

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. NAME
   COMMON: Armory of the Kentish Guards
   AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION
   STREET AND NUMBER: Armory and Peirce Streets
   CITY OR TOWN: East Greenwich
   STATE: Rhode Island, 02818
   CODE: 555
   COUNTY: Kent
   CODE: 003

3. CLASSIFICATION
   CATEGORY (Check One)
   [ ] District [ ] Building [ ] Site [ ] Structure [ ] Object
   OWNERSHIP [ ] Public [ ] Private [ ] Both
   ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
   [ ] Yes: [ ] Restricted [ ] Unrestricted [ ] No
   STATUS [ ] Occupied [ ] In Process [ ] Preservation work in progress
   [ ] Unoccupied [ ] Being Considered
   PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)
   [ ] Agricultural [ ] Commercial [ ] Educational [ ] Entertainment
   [ ] Government [ ] Industrial [ ] Military [ ] Museum
   [ ] Private Residence [ ] Religious [ ] Other (Specify)
   [ ] Park [ ] Transportation [ ] Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY
   OWNER'S NAME: State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
   STREET AND NUMBER: State House, 90 Smith Street
   CITY OR TOWN: Providence
   STATE: Rhode Island, 02903
   CODE: 555

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
   COURT HOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: East Greenwich Town Hall
   STREET AND NUMBER: 333 Peirce Street
   CITY OR TOWN: East Greenwich
   STATE: Rhode Island, 02818
   CODE: 555

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
   TITLE OF SURVEY: Statewide Survey of Historic Buildings
   DATE OF SURVEY: 1970-1971
   [ ] Federal [ ] State [ ] County [ ] Local
   DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
   STREET AND NUMBER: State House, 90 Smith Street
   CITY OR TOWN: Providence
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FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER  DATE
The main interior space of the armory has always been the large drill-hall with its tall windows. Originally, however, this was somewhat diminished by a ward-room on each side of the main entrance at the west. In the 1890's these two rooms were re-located in the eastern extension of the building, where other small rooms were built above them and where there was installed a stairway which also serves the basement and a shallow balcony overlooking the drill-hall. Probably at this same time occurred the application around the drill-hall of a five-foot wainscot of quartered oak. Two large glazed cabinets and three exit doors now fill the east wall of the drill-hall below the balcony. Behind the cabinets and through the doors are, on first-floor level, the flag room, the drum-corps room and the stairwell. Above are the quartermaster's room, two storage rooms and access to the balcony. The basement now contains the company room, a kitchen, toilet facilities and a heater room—these taking up most of the space.

The building is owned by the State of Rhode Island but continues in occupancy by the Kentish Guards, who meet there every week and who preserve their records, relics and trophies of nearly two hundred years of existence there.
The armory building, constructed in 1842, is a timber-framed structure faced on three sides with clapboarding and on the fourth, or front, by matched boarding. It rests upon a basement of either stone or brick, now covered by cement, and carries a gable roof. Its corner site slopes downward considerably from front to rear. The building is an oblong of about sixty-one (originally fifty) feet by thirty feet; it was extended at the rear in the 1890's. It is painted white.

The armory is of Greek Revival temple-form in its proportions and its frontal appearance, particularly. At the west end, the entrance front facing on Peirce Street, is a shallow temple portico (its base very close to sidewalk level) with Doric columns placed distyle in antis between panelled corner piers with concomitant classical capping treatment. Above is a plain, well-proportioned pediment above an architrave with small dentils (the frieze area not being omitted). Within the portico a very large centre doorway of two leaves has an enframement of attenuated panelled pilasters supporting a frieze and cornice. Flanking the door are two large windows with similar but simpler trim. The leaves of the six-foot-wide door are hung on six great strap-hinges and are of matched boards painted a dark green and heavily studded by diamond-headed nails in a diaper pattern. The two-leafed shutters of the front windows are similarly treated. The north and south sides of the building each have four very tall, narrow windows enframed like those at the front, but without exterior shutters. At the east end of the building, where it was extended and where the land drops, windows are of normal size and serve three interior levels, including the basement. This is a highly pleasing an successful simple exterior of its period and style—a provincial classicism often used for small-town court houses, academies, libraries, banks.

Its interior arrangements are at present thus:

First floor.
Second floor.
Basement.

(See Continuation Sheet)
The Armory of the Kentish Guards is a fine example of Greek Revival architecture as used for semi-public buildings which, however small, were nevertheless intended to have a dignified and—if possible—monumental aspect. This is achieved here through the portico and the arrangement of openings which it contains. The building has, of course, been since its erection a visually pleasing landmark of East Greenwich. It still serves its original purpose, housing the activities of the volunteer militia unit or "chartered company" for which it was built.

This group, the Kentish Guards, has importance in Rhode Island history. It was founded and named in 1771 by fifty-six citizens of Kent County; its first captain was James Varnum, and at the beginning it received military training under the direction of Nathanael Greene. By April of 1775 the body had grown to one hundred and ten men, who set forth on the march within three hours of hearing of the Concord-Lexington battles. They subsequently returned to East Greenwich and throughout the Revolutionary War garrisoned harbour and other local defences. During the War of 1812 they were stationed at Newport, and during Dorr's Rebellion in this state in 1842 they were sent to protect the State Arsenal in Providence. The Guards provided two full infantry companies in the Civil War. The fifth-oldest chartered military company in the United States, this body has provided many men besides Varum and Greene who have been prominent in Rhode Island's military history.

**PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

**State:** Rhode Island  
**County:** Kent

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AND/OR HISTORIC: 

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STREET AND NUMBER: Armory and Peirce Streets  
CITY OR TOWN: East Greenwich 
STATE: Rhode Island  

**PHOTO REFERENCE**  
PHOTO CREDIT: Richard B. Harrington  
DATE OF PHOTO: 1970  
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, State House, 90 Smith Street, Providence, R.I., 02903

**IDENTIFICATION**  
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.: Exterior seen from the south-west.
<table>
<thead>
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<td>4. IDENTIFICATION</td>
<td>Entrance façade.</td>
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GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES
Latitude: 41° 32' 10" N
Longitude: 71° 27' 06" W
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STREET AND NUMBER: Armory and Peirce Streets

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STATE: Rhode Island

CODE COUNTY: Kent

SOURCE: U.S. Geological Survey

SCALE: 1:24,000

DATE: 1957

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.