**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY – NOMINATION FORM**

*(Type all entries – complete applicable sections)*

### 1. NAME

**COMMON:** Jamestown Windmill

**AND/OR HISTORIC:**

### 2. LOCATION

**STREET AND NUMBER:** North Road, 0.1 mile north of Weeden Lane

**CITY OR TOWN:** Jamestown

**STATE:** Rhode Island, 02835

**CODE:** 005

### 3. CLASSIFICATION

**CATEGORY (Check One):**

- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**OWNERSHIP:**

- Public
- Private
- Both

**STATUS:**

- Occupied
- Unoccupied
- Preservation work in progress

**ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC:**

- Yes:
  - Restricted
  - Unrestricted
  - No

**PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate):**

- Agricultural
- Government
- Park
- Transportation
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Private Residence
- Other (Specify)
- Educational
- Military
- Religious
- Scientific

### 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

**OWNER'S NAME:** Jamestown Historical Society

**STREET AND NUMBER:** C/o Mrs. J. H. N. Potter, 131 Narragansett Avenue

**CITY OR TOWN:** Jamestown

**STATE:** Rhode Island, 02835

**CODE:** 005

### 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:**

- Town Clerk

**STREET AND NUMBER:** 71 Narragansett Avenue

**CITY OR TOWN:** Jamestown

**STATE:** Rhode Island, 02835

**CODE:** 005

### 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

**TITLE OF SURVEY:** Historic American Buildings Survey

**DATE OF SURVEY:** 1958

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:** Library of Congress

**STREET AND NUMBER:** Independence Avenue and 1st Street, S. E.

**CITY OR TOWN:** Washington

**STATE:** District of Columbia

**CODE:** 11
### 7. DESCRIPTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDITION</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Deteriorated</th>
<th>Ruins</th>
<th>Unexposed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Original Site</td>
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**DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE**

The Jamestown Windmill, built in 1787, stands on high land on Conanicut Island, overlooking the East Passage of Narragansett Bay. Massively constructed of hand-hewn oak timbers diagonally braced, and placed on a rubble foundation, it is shingled on the outside. The corners are sheathed with vertical strips. In shape the mill is a three-story octagonal tower about 30 feet in height with a domed top or bonnet whose interior framing is umbrella-like. This bonnet carries the windshaft which holds the latticed wooden arms, or sweeps, and it is designed to turn on an iron track (the original track was of wood) so that the 25-foot vanes may be faced into the winds. (In earlier mills, the building rested on a post or pivot, and the whole structure was turned to face the wind.) A simple plank door with strap hinges opens at the south into the first floor, which is 20 feet wide. There is also a "back" door. The two granite grinding stones, 5½ feet in diameter, are in position under the driveshaft. A lever raises the upper stone by about ½ inch for grinding, when the corn is poured between them through a trap-door and chute from the second floor. A crane device can lift the top stone away, when this is required, to be roughened by a set of sharp rods. The walls have exposed interior corner posts, studs, cross-braces, and sheathing. (Much of the wood, including elements of the extremely heavy grinding table, is a part of skillful restoration.)

Narrow stairs lead up to the second story, which provided storage for both corn and meal. The third floor is filled by the huge wheel that surrounds the windshaft. This wheel transmits the motion of the outdoor arms to the main shaft, a heavy, vertical post connected to the top grinding stone. The old wooden gears have been replaced with iron ones, and much of the wheel bracing has been rebuilt. The bonnet itself, which turns on a gear track connected to a large sprocketed wheel outside turned by pulling a continuous chain, has been repaired and reshingled. Here, as in each of the three floors, tiny windows admit only enough light to see; the large wheel is a striking sight even in the semi-darkness. A frame of delicate arched wooden ribs supports the bonnet.

The windmill remained in use by the community until 1896. Restoration of the exterior was undertaken in 1957, and in 1960 restoration and repair of the mechanical and grinding works inside the building made them operable again.
# Statement of Significance

Windmills of this type, once common and basic necessities, are now fast-disappearing, interesting examples of former ways of grinding grain. Believed to be the third windmill on Jamestown Island, this structure has stood (with the exception of repair and replacement when necessary) unchanged since 1787. It was then built with town appropriations, and later it came into the cooperative ownership of fourteen individual local millers who used it. It is a good example of early civic endeavor to provide a public facility or utility, and it is a fine example also of early utilitarian architecture and early mechanical contrivance.

The mill remained in continual operation until 1896. Since that time it has been under the care, first, of the Windmill Society which in 1904 bought it to preserve it and--soon afterwards and since--of the Jamestown Historical Society. The windmill has been restored to operating condition largely through locally-gathered funds. Although the windshaft and vanes had to be replaced after severe hurricane damage, the millstones, gears, crane etc. are all original, as are most of the structure's timbers.

A picturesque landmark at all times, the building is open to the public during the summer season, giving opportunity to inspect the mechanism and operation of an early gristmill and the fine internal construction of this particular one.
**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Armbrust, Henry N., and others: *The Old Jamestown Windmill (Jamestown, Rhode Island, 1961)*.


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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORNER</th>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
<th>LONGITUDE</th>
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<tr>
<td>SW</td>
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**APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:** 1 acre

**LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

**NAME AND TITLE:** B. Christopher Bene, Surveyor-Researcher

**ORGANIZATION:** Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

**DATE:** January 8, 1972

**STREET AND NUMBER:** State House, 90 Smith Street

**CITY OR TOWN:** Providence

**STATE:** Rhode Island, 02903

**12. STATE/LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

- National ☐
- State ☑
- Local ☐

**Name**

**Title**

**Date**

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

**Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation**

**Date**

**ATTEST:**

**Keeper of The National Register**

**Date**
**Common Name:** Jamestown Windmill  

**Location:**  
North Road, 0.1 mile north of Weeden Lane  
City or Town: Jamestown  
State: Rhode Island  
County: Newport  

**Photo Reference:**  
Credit: B. Christopher Rene  
Date of Photo: November, 1971  
Negative Filed At: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, State House, 90 Smith Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02903  

**Identification:**  
Describe View, Direction, Etc.: Exterior from the west.
### 1. Name

**Common:** Jamestown Windmill

**AND/OR Historic:**

### 2. Location

**Street and number:** North Road, 0.1 mile north of Weeden Lane

**City or Town:** Jamestown

**State:** Rhode Island

### 3. Photo Reference

**Photo Credit:** B. Christopher Bene

**Date of Photo:** November, 1971

**Negative Filed At:** Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, State House, 90 Smith Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02903

### 4. Identification

**Describe View, Direction, etc.:**

Detail of interior at first-floor level, showing grinding table and millstones.
GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES

Latitude: 41° 30' 59.55" N
Longitude: 71° 22' 26.28" W
## Form 10.301

### UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

#### NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

### Rhode Island

#### COUNTY

#### Newport

### PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENTRY NUMBER</th>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tbody>
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### 2. LOCATION

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- **CITY OR TOWN:** Jamestown

- **STATE:** Rhode Island

  - **CODE:** 11

  - **COUNTY:** Newport

  - **CODE:** 005

### 3. MAP REFERENCE

- **SOURCE:** U. S. Geological Survey

- **SCALE:** 1:24,000

- **DATE:** 1955

### 4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

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