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: Smith-Appleby House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Stillwater Road, approximately 300 feet to the southeast of its intersection with Capron Road

CITY OR TOWN: Smithfield

STATE: Rhode Island

3. CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY (Check One)</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
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<td>District Building</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site</td>
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<td>Unoccupied</td>
<td>Yes: Unrestricted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>In Process</td>
<td>No</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Entertainment
- Industrial
- Military
- Religious
- Transportation
- Private Residence
- Military
- Scientific

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME: Smithfield Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER: Street

CITY OR TOWN: Smithfield

STATE: Rhode Island

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:

Town Clerk's Office

STREET AND NUMBER: 64 Farnum Pike

CITY OR TOWN: Smithfield

STATE: Rhode Island

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey RI-80

DATE OF SURVEY: 1955

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
The Smith-Appleby House is a clapboarded two-and-a-half-story gable-roofed house with a two-story ell on the south side and a one-story "shed" addition on the north. It faces south and originally fronted on the early 18th century road between Providence and Smithfield. It now overlooks Georgia-ville Pond which was created when Stillwater Brook was dammed for industrial purposes in the middle 1800's.

The house, built according to genealogical records in 1713 by Elisha Smith, was originally a saltbox with two main chambers, one on either side of the massive stone chimney, and three very small chambers to the rear or north. Structural evidence -- the framing, wall treatment, and suggestions of casement windows in the upstairs southwest chamber -- indicate that the western half of the house was originally two stories high. The eastern half may also have been two stories high or it may have been only one and a half stories, with the unfinished half story used as a sleeping loft. In either case, both halves were united under the common saltbox roof on the north.

About 1750 a one-story shed addition was built along two thirds of the northern wall to enlarge the middle and western of the three small rear rooms. At this time also the roof of the house was raised to a full two and a half stories, causing the saltbox roofline to disappear and creating three small northern chambers on the second story. The casement windows were also altered into much larger double-hung twelve-over-eight windows whose frames protrude from the surface of the clapboards and whose caps, at second-story level, are framed into the cornice of the house.

The two-story ell which extends from the front of the house was built about the time of the Revolutionary War. It displays similar window treatments and has an interior end brick chimney.

The last significant change to the house occurred in the opening decades of the 19th century -- the installation of the doors that presently lead into the main house and into the ell. The central six-panel front door has a handsome Federal flat-headed frame distinguished by sidelights and four slender flanking pilasters. The other doors are also six-panel with simple flat-headed frames.

The interior of the Smith-Appleby House is a delightful puzzle. The staircase in the spacious entry hall, dating from the 1750's reworking of the house, rises in three short runs and has an astragal-molded closed string course, handsome turned balusters, molded railing, and acorn pendants.

(See Continuation Sheet 1)
7. Description

To the right or east of the hall is the keeping room, which retains its excellent early woodwork details. The summer beam and all of the massive oak girts and corner posts (except those on the south side where the ell was added and the front door, changed) are chamfered with lamb's tongue stops. The walls are vertically sheathed with wide beaded-edged planks which have never been painted. A flat plank with a beaded edge surmounts the heavy lintel of the large granite fireplace, which has, at the rear, a brick beehive oven.

Three rooms open off the keeping room to the north. The two most easterly of these were originally one room and were probably made two when the shed addition was built onto the rooms adjoining them on the west in the 1750's. The westerly room of the pair was, at the same time, turned into a cupboard or pantry and still retains its original shelving.

The third room opening off the keeping room was originally the middle room under the one-story part of the saltbox roof and was enlarged on the north by the shed extension of the 1750's. An addition to the original chimney, built also of stone on a triangular plan, was probably installed at this time to accommodate corner fireplaces in each of the two enlarged rooms. Certainly the fine fireplace woodwork -- the bolection-molded surround, the horizontal raised panel beneath the shallow molded mantel, and the pair of raised panels flanking the glazed "deacon's cupboard" -- dates from this period.

So, also, does the somewhat simpler woodwork surrounding the corner fireplace in the northwest corner room. The walls of this northwest chamber are covered with handsome stencilled floral motifs with stylized cornice and painted base, which date from the decades immediately following the Revolutionary War. They are in surprisingly good condition in spite of their cracking plaster background. The southern wall of this chamber follows an irregular course, determined by the space occupied by the sizeable closet to the west and the curve-backed cupboard built into the north wall of the front chamber -- both most likely mid-eighteenth-century features.

The front southwest chamber is approximately the same size as the keeping room just across the entry hall from it. The room's originally-exposed framing members have been covered over by a later, and necessarily lower, plaster ceiling and by the beaded-edged corner post encasements. As in the
keeping room, the corner posts for the fireplace wall are not in the corners but are, rather, set into the room by about two feet. The fireplace treatment is typical of the 1750’s period: bolection-molded surround, with two raised panels of unequal widths, one above the shallow mantel shelf and one below it. The round-headed arched built-in cupboard on the north wall, with its panelled doors below and glazed doors above, is of the same vintage. The floors of the room are painted to resemble marble and are in remarkably fine condition.

Two main chambers flank the stairhall on the second floor. Restoration work in the southwest chamber has revealed the original beaded-edged vertical wall sheathing which bears the outlines of earlier smaller casement windows on the south and west walls. That the present windows are later additions is made clear by these outlines and also by the fact that the original ceiling beams on the south and west have been cut out for the taller heads of the 1750 windows. The diagonal cross braces on the west wall, the four gunstock corner posts, and the lamb’s-tongue-stopped chamfering of the southern, northern, and eastern ceiling beams and of the two eastern corner posts (again set into the room by about two feet) are eloquent reminders of the building’s earliest form. The small brick fireplace with its plain bolection molding surround is probably original to this finely-finished room.

The southeast chamber, in direct contrast, was never well finished in the builder’s sense of the term and has no fireplace; which facts, along with various alterations in the framing members, lead to a conclusion that this may not have been a full-story room originally.

The three small northern rooms are sheathed with fine wide beaded-edged planks which have never been painted. Only the westernmost of these rooms has a small fireplace. An L-shaped hallway in front of these rooms passes behind and to the east of the chimney. From this hallway the original large smoke closet, built abutting the south side of the chimney is accessible.

The staircase to the attic is a continuation of the main front staircase with identical astragal molding and acorn pendant detail. It was originally open all the way up to the attic. Delicate willow tree stencilling is still visible on the plaster wall beside it.

(See Continuation Sheet 3)
7. Description

The spacious attic is itself interesting for its structural revelations. The original heavy roof rafters immediately surrounding the chimney have been retained but have been cut and pieced to lengthen them. Elsewhere the rafters have been replaced with more modern (c. 1750) timbers -- another indication that the roof has been raised. The fact that the chimney is of stone to within a foot of the roof peak and is finished above this in brick also suggests roofline alterations.

The two-story ell built against the eastern side of the south front of the house contains a single room on each floor. The first-story room is a kitchen complete with brick fireplace and bake oven, and built-in sink, possibly dating from the Greek Revival period. Just inside the western wall of the ell an enclosed staircase leads up to the rather plain, plaster-walled second-story chamber.

Various structural changes made to the house in the course of the first one hundred years of its existence account for many of its architecturally unusual features. Among these are uneven fenestration on all sides, roof gables which do not peak directly over the center of the gable ends, a "central chimney" which is not exactly central, a variety of interior floor levels, and ragged and replaced framing in the south wall where the ell was let into it.

An 1860 one-and-a-half story barn, a small shed, and a one-seater "biffy" to the east and south of the house are included in this nomination.

9. Bibliography

Steere, Thomas: History of the Town of Smithfield (Providence, 1881).

The Smith-Appleby House is a living record of the architectural evolution of a dwelling. Evidences of the house's growth from saltbox origins in 1713 through formal elegance at mid-century to gawky conglomerate following the Revolutionary War, are abundant and, more important, have been little altered since 1810 or '20. Lamb's-tongue-stop chamfered beams, beaded-edged sheathing, hardware, four-panel doors, and wall stencilling have remained in most cases untouched since the day they were installed.

The house was, as has been said, begun by Elisha Smith in 1713. Elisha was the grandson of Roger Williams' compatriot John Smith, who established the first grist mill in Providence in 1646, and was granted a tract of land in what later became Smithfield in 1731. John Smith's son John, Elisha's father, settled in the wilderness of Glocester. Elisha settled on part of his grandfather's tract; and may have been, like his grandfather, a miller by trade. The foundations of an early grist mill still remain to the west of the house along the old course of the Stillwater Brook.

Thomas Appleby, born in 1760 in Smithfield, was the first Appleby to live in the house. He married Elisha's daughter Wait sometime before 1787 and was probably responsible for the changes made to the house following the Revolutionary War.

Remarkably, descendants of the Smith and Appleby families have occupied the house continuously until as recently as 1959. This may well account for the fortunate happenstance that only minimal changes have been made to this outstanding early dwelling since the beginning of the 19th century. The house is an incomparable living document of architectural history; and has just been acquired by the Smithfield Historical Society, which plans to restore it as a museum house.
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

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LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES

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<td>41° 54'.725&quot;</td>
<td>71° 31'.618&quot;</td>
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APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

NAME AND TITLE:
Ancelin V. Lynch

ORGANIZATION:
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
52 Power Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Providence

STATE:
Rhode Island

CODE:
02906

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 [x] State [ ] Local [ ]

Name
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE: APR 12 1974
# Smith-Appleby House

## Location
- **Street and Number**: Stillwater Road
- **City or Town**: Smithfield (Esmond)
- **State**: Rhode Island, 02917

## Photograph Reference
- **Photograph**: Robert P. Foley
- **Date of Photo**: May, 1970
- **Negative Filed At**: Robert P. Foley, 25, Bridge Street, Newport, Rhode Island, 02810

## Identification
Exterior from the south, showing original front façade and later ell at right.
1. NAME
   COMMON: Smith-Appleby House
   AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION
   STREET AND NUMBER: Stillwater Road
   CITY OR TOWN: Smithfield (Esmond)
   STATE: Rhode Island, 02917

3. PHOTO REFERENCE
   PHOTO CREDIT: Robert P. Foley
   DATE OF PHOTO: May, 1970
   NEGATIVE FILED AT: Robert P. Foley, 25, Bridge Street,
                               Newport, Rhode Island, 02840

4. IDENTIFICATION
   DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
   Original main (south) entrance.
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

*(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)*

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<td>DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. View in second-floor bedroom, showing timber construction.</td>
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**1. NAME**

- **COMMON:** Smith-Appleby House

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- **STATE:** Rhode Island, 02917

**3. PHOTO REFERENCE**

- **PHOTO CREDIT:** Robert P. Foley
- **DATE OF PHOTO:** 1969
- **NEGATIVE FILED AT:** Robert P. Foley, 25, Bridge Street, Newport, Rhode Island, 02840

**4. IDENTIFICATION**

**DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.**

View in second-floor bedroom, showing unfinished original fireplace.
**NAME**

COMMON: Smith-Appleby House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: Stillwater Road

CITY OR TOWN: Smithfield (Esmond)

STATE: Rhode Island, 02917

**PHOTO REFERENCE**

PHOTO CREDIT: Robert P. Foley

DATE OF PHOTO: 1969

NEGATIVE FILED AT: Robert P. Foley, 25, Bridge Street, Newport, Rhode Island, 02810

**IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Fireplace wall of living-room, showing wallpaper copying original stencilled design.
**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

*(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)*

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**ENTRY NUMBER**

**DATE**

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**IDENTIFICATION**

*DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.*

Wall of keeping-room, showing hearth and ovens.
<table>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>STATE</strong></td>
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**1. NAME**

**COMMON:** Smith-Appleby House

**AND/OR HISTORIC:**

---

**2. LOCATION**

**STREET AND NUMBER:** Stillwater Road

**CITY OR TOWN:** Smithfield (Esmond)

**STATE:** Rhode Island, 02917

**CODE:** 38

**COUNTY:** Providence

**CODE:** 007

---

**3. PHOTO REFERENCE**

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Robert P. Foley

**DATE OF PHOTO:** May, 1970

**NEGATIVE FILED AT:** Robert P. Foley, 25, Bridge Street, Newport, Rhode Island, 02840

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**4. IDENTIFICATION**

**DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.**

Exterior from the east.
**NAME:**

**COMMON:** Smith-Appleby House

**AND/OR HISTORIC:**

---

**LOCATION**

**STREET AND NUMBER:** Stillwater Road

**CITY OR TOWN:** Smithfield (Esmond)

**STATE:** Rhode Island, 02917

**CODE:** 38

**COUNTY:** Providence

**CODE:** 007

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**PHOTO REFERENCE**

**PHOTO CREDIT:** Robert P. Foley

**DATE OF PHOTO:** May, 1970

**NEGATIVE FILED AT:** Robert P. Foley, 25, Bridge Street, Newport, Rhode Island, 20810

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**IDENTIFICATION**

**DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.:** Exterior seen from the north.
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| 2. LOCATION |  |
| STREET AND NUMBER: | Stillwater Road |
| CITY OR TOWN: | Smithfield |
| STATE: | Rhode Island |
| CODE: | 44 |
| COUNTY: | Providence |
| CODE: | 007 |

| 3. MAP REFERENCE |  |
| SOURCE: | U.S. Geological Survey |
| SCALE: | 1:24,000 |
| DATE: | 1954; photorevised 1970 |

| 4. REQUIREMENTS |  |
| TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS |  |
| 1. Property boundaries where required. |  |
| 2. North arrow. |  |
| 3. Latitude and longitude reference. |  |