United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name: Willow Dell
other name/site number: Weeden Farm

2. Location

street & number: 2700 Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry Highway
not for publication: N/A
city/town: South Kingstown vicinity: N/A
state: RI county: Washington code: 009 zip code: 02879

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private
Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contributing</th>
<th>Noncontributing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>buildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>sites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>objects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: Rhode Island Single-Family Houses
USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Property name: Willow Dell, Washington County, Rhode Island

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meetings does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of certifying official

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting or other official

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

6. Function or Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historic:</th>
<th>Sub:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DOMESTIC</td>
<td>single dwelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE</td>
<td>agricultural outbuildings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>agricultural fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current:</td>
<td>Sub:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DOMESTIC</td>
<td>single dwelling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE</td>
<td>storage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>agricultural field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>sports facility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. Description

Architectural Classification:

COLONIAL

Other Description:

Materials: foundation STONE: Granite roof Asphalt
walls WOOD: Shingle other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: 1752

Significant Dates: 1752 1871 1881 1945

Significant Person(s):

Cultural Affiliation:

Architect/Builder:

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X See continuation sheet.
9. Major Bibliographical References

X See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey    #
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record    #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

X State historic preservation office
___ Other state agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
___ Other -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: approx. 7 acres

UTM References: Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

A  19  286720  4585690  B  ___  ___  ___
C  ___  ___  ___  D  ___  ___  ___

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: X See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: X See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

Virginia H. Adams, Senior Architectural Historian; and
Name/Title: Catherine deJarnette Vieth, Assistant Architectural Historian

Organization: The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. Date: Sept. 1995
Street & Number: 210 Lonsdale Avenue Telephone: (401) 728-8780
City or Town: Pawtucket State: RI ZIP: 02860
Description

Willow Dell, also known as the Weeden Farm, is a seven-acre property screened by vegetation from the south side of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry Highway in semi-rural South Kingstown. The property includes a mid-eighteenth-century farmhouse enlarged and remodeled in the twentieth century, a nineteenth-century stable/barn converted into a summer residence in 1950, three garage and storage outbuildings, one pump house site, a memorial stone fountain (structure), and a stone wall system (structure). The property originally extended over 600 acres, from Wash Pond north of the highway all the way south to Block Island Sound. Much of that land has been sold over the years, and only the seven acres remaining around the farmhouse complex is being nominated.

The main block of the house was built by Colonel Jeremiah Bowen for his daughter in 1752. The house has both expanded and contracted through its history, but its historic core the retains significant spatial and material integrity. The one-and-a-half story, flaring gambrel roof structure faces east—an unusual orientation for rural eighteenth-century farmhouses—and has a large brick center chimney with a corbelled cap and a five-bay facade with center entrance. The entrance is below a five-light transom and flanked by plain pilasters with fluted caps. Two ells extend to the west and south respectively: a nineteenth-century two-story, three-by-two-bay, gable-roof ell stretches to the rear and a 1945 one-and-a-half-story gambrel roof ell with a shed-roof porch is set back from the plane of the facade. The walls are sheathed in natural wood shingles, and the simple wood trim is painted. The windows are twelve-over-twelve and six-over-six double hung sash; one or two original twelve-over-twelve windows remain on the rear elevation.

The house as it stands today is largely a result of restoration and renovations made in 1945. The house was significantly enlarged into the nineteenth century. In 1871, a two-story, flank-gable addition was made to the south end, doubling the size of the house. Ten years later, a two-and-a-half-story gambrel-roof addition was attached to the south end of the 1871 addition. These three sections, including the original block of the house, were very distinct from one another; the second addition dominated the overall structure with its towering mass. These two large additions
were removed during the 1940s restoration, overseen by Providence architect F. Ellis Jackson.¹

On the interior the plan follows the standard Rhode Island five-room plan with some modifications dating to 1945. The entrance and stair hall are centered in front of the large central brick chimney, which shelters a smoke room within its mass. All of the rooms encircling the chimney have simple wood mantels with wide, plain friezes, and decorative moldings around the firebox and below the mantel shelf. To the south of the entrance hall three rooms have been combined to create a large L-plan room, used as a living and dining room. The dining area at rear center was the original kitchen, evidenced by the large cooking fireplace and beehive oven. A large sitting room the first floor of the south addition. The rear ell contains the service wing, with kitchen, laundry, and storage areas on the first floor. On the second floor a plan similar to that on the first floor obtains. There, however, the large L-plan room is not repeated, and small bedrooms occupy the space under the eaves.

The house occupies a landscaped site that has evolved through its history. Granite entrance posts mark the entrance from the street. A curving driveway leads from the highway around the north side of the house to the parking area and garage in the rear. The Wager Weeden Memorial Fountain, a stone marker commemorating Weeden's ability to bring fresh water to the property from Wash Pond, is located just outside of the posts. The property still retains European beeches planted in the late nineteenth century. A network of field-stone walls envelops the house and creates a visual link among house, outbuildings, and fields. The walls slope down to create a defined entrance to the fields south of the house. This entrance, as well as a formal garden no longer extant, were designed in the 1920s by local landscape architect Sibley Smith. Only the stone entrance remains of the formal garden. Two tennis courts, constructed circa 1910, are located southeast of the house, just south of the stone wall.

¹Jackson (1879-1950), 1909 graduate of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, was a leading Rhode Island practitioner of Georgian and Colonial Revival. Jackson clearly esteemed historic buildings, for as early as 1923 he listed "Old Houses Restored and Renovated"—including Providence's Nightingale-Brown and Captain James Benson Houses—as a category on his curriculum vitae.
The large, late nineteenth-century one-and-a-half-story stable is east of the house and faces the south. It succeeds an earlier stable, destroyed by fire in the 1890s, but stands farther away from the house than the earlier stable. In 1950, it was converted into a summer rental property. It is clad in wood shingles with simple wood trim at the doors and windows. The asphalt-shingled gambrel roof has three shed dormers with six-over-six double hung sash. The windows and doors on the facade have been altered to accommodate the transformation from stable to living space, although original small casement windows remain on the side elevations. The simple entrance is centered on the facade. The remains of a pump house are evident in the stone wall between the house and the stable.

The late-nineteenth-century shingled garage is located to the west of the house. It was originally a wood shed before it transformation into a garage in the mid-to-late twentieth century.

Two late-nineteenth-century, agricultural shingled outbuildings are located southwest of the house: a long, low, one-story cow barn and a one-and-a-half-story barn/garage with granite-block east wall.
Property name: Willow Dell, Washington County, Rhode Island

Section number 7

Photographs

3. Photographer: The Public Archaeology Lab., Inc.
4. Date: August 8, 1995
5. Negative: R.I. Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
(Above information pertains to all photographs)

6. View northwest of facade
7. Photo #1 of 7

6. View northwest of rear elevation and kitchen ell.
7. Photo #2 of 7

6. View northeast of rear elevation and kitchen ell.
7. Photo #3 of 7

6. Interior view of fireplace and beehive oven
7. Photo #4 of 7

6. View northwest of garage
7. Photo #5 of 7

6. View west of farm outbuilding
7. Photo #6 of 7

6. View south of stone wall and field
7. Photo #7 of 7
Property name: Willow Dell, Washington County, Rhode Island

Section number: 7

1. House
2. Stable
3. Garage
4. Barn/garage
5. Cow Barn
6. Stone wall system
7. Pump house remains
8. Wager Weeden Memorial Fountain
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Property name: Willow Dell, Washington County, Rhode Island
Section number: 7

FIGURE 1
HISTORIC VIEW
Source: Brown 1937:138

WILLOW DELL, HOMESTEAD OF THE WEEDENS, WITH LATEST ADDITION. ITS PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN ABOUT 1881, AND SHOWS "AUNT ELVIRA," ONLY DAUGHTER OF WAGER WEEDE, SEATED UPON THE PORCH, AND ELIZA BARNES WEEDEEN, ELDEST DAUGHTER OF WILLIAM B. WEEDEEN AND GREAT GRANDDAUGHTER OF WAGER WEEDEEN, ON HORSEBACK.
FIGURE 2
WAGER WEEDEN MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN
Source: Brown 1937:4

To Wager Weeden
Who lived on this farm from 1825 to 1863
And brought this water here
Matunuck 1875

The Weeden Memorial Fountain at Matunuck
Property name: Willow Dell, Washington County, Rhode Island

Section number: 8

Significance

Willow Dell is significant as a well-preserved example of mid-eighteenth-century rural vernacular domestic design with significant Colonial Revival restoration and additions—both discussed in the single-family house context for South Kingstown (Adams 1994). It exhibits the typical characteristics of the rural colonial farmhouse, including a symmetrical, five-bay facade, central entrance with transom light, gambrel roof with cornice returns, and twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash. Though slightly modified the interior configuration follows the standard Rhode Island five-room, center-chimney plan. The 1945 restoration, at the hands of a talented revivalist architect, illustrates the growing appreciation for old houses in the mid-twentieth century and documents attitudes toward early houses as well as their late nineteenth-century additions and modifications. The property possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The alteration of the farmhouse into a rambling summer estate illustrates the same change in the population of South Kingstown, from farmers to vacationing summer visitors. Once again the house is a year-round residence, with its rural colonial origins evident.

Single-family houses form the largest group of historic domestic buildings in Rhode Island. Examples of this house type, dating from 1676 to circa 1945, exist in all of Rhode Island's cities and towns. Single-family houses in South Kingstown are scattered in various areas of the town.

Colonel Jeremiah Bowen built the house at Willow Dell, also known as the Weeden Farm, in 1752 for his daughter. Wager Weeden purchased the farmhouse and 600 acres in 1826; the property passed through his younger daughter Polly Weeden Smith to her son, Nathaniel W. Smith, Jr, the late husband of the current owner.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Property name Willow Dell, Washington County, Rhode Island

Section number 9

Major Bibliographical References


Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Historic Building Data Sheet, 1974.

Smith, Jr., Mrs. Nathaniel W. Personal interview, 1995.
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Continuation Sheet

Property name  Willow Dell, Washington County, Rhode Island

Section number  10

Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description:
The nominated property boundaries are defined as South Kingstown Assessor's Plat 80:2, Lot 1.

Boundary Justification:
The boundaries conform to the present lot associated with the property, encompassing the house and the accompanying outbuildings and agricultural fields.
Willow Dell
Washington County
South Kingstown, R.I.
Photo #5 of 7