

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name: Hygeia House

other name/site number: Hygeia Annex, Seaside House

2. Location

street & number: Beach Avenue

not for publication: N/A

city/town: New Shoreham vicinity: N/A

state: RI county: Washington code: 009 zip code: 02807

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	buildings
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

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

Name of related multiple property listing: Historic and Architectural Resources of Block Island, RI, 1636-present

Property name Hygeia House, Washington County, New Shoreham, RI

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 meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

_____ See continuation sheet.

Frederick C. Williamson

Signature of certifying official

5/20/01
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

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

_____ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- _____ entered in the National Register
_____ See continuation sheet.
- _____ determined eligible for the National Register
_____ See continuation sheet.
- _____ determined not eligible for the National Register
- _____ removed from the National Register
- _____ other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: DOMESTIC

Sub: hotel

Current: DOMESTIC

Sub: hotel

Property name Hygeia House, Washington County, New Shoreham, RI

7. Description

Architectural Classification: Late Victorian/Second Empire

Other Description:

Materials: foundation STONE roof ASPHALT
 walls WOOD/weatherboard 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: A

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions: B)

Areas of Significance: ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period(s) of Significance: 1885-1950s

Significant Dates: 1885 1907

Significant Person(s):

Cultural Affiliation:

Architect/Builder: A Wallis, Francis E.

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

X See continuation sheet.

Property name Hygeia House, Washington County, New Shoreham, RI

9. Major Bibliographical References

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:

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

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property: .76 acres

UTM References	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>19</u>	<u>284280</u>	<u>4561480</u>	B		
C				D		

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Town of New Shoreham Assessor's Map Plat 5, Lot 113.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

The boundary of the property is the lot historically associated with the Hygeia Hotel Annex, to which it was moved in 1907.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Tracey Dillon, Assoc., AIA

Organization: Tracey Dillon Designs

Date: 2/7/00

Street & Number: P.O. Box 1120

Telephone: 401-466-5054

City or Town: New Shoreham

State: RI ZIP: 02807

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Description

Hygeia House (1885, 1907) is a large, clapboarded, wood-frame hotel building, with a high mansard roof and a wrap-around porch. Set on a narrow neck between Trim's Pond and Harbor Pond, Hygeia House is located on a small knoll and faces south, overlooking Harbor Pond.

The hotel is two stories tall on its front elevation, three stories on the rear elevation. The main block of the building is four bays wide, with the addition of a center entrance bay on the first floor. There is a mansard stair tower on the east side of the building. The foundation is cut stone.

The building is trimmed simply. The eaves have paired brackets. The windows have flat frames, heavy molded lintels supported by small consoles, and 2-over-2 double-hung sash. The dormers are covered by shallow gables; the dormer windows have segmental arch heads. The first-floor porch has plain columns and turned balusters; it sits on brick piers.

The front door has arch-top glass panels. It opens into a central stair hall with a large room on either side (dining room and parlor). The stair has turned balusters, molded rail, and a heavy square newel on the first floor, turned newels on the upper floors. Painted matchboard siding covers the walls of the stair hall. The floor is painted wood.

The first-floor public rooms of the hotel have flat plaster walls and painted wood floors. The west room (parlor) has a fireplace with a simple mantel--plain columns support a heavy mantel shelf.

At the rear of the first floor is the kitchen, much modernized, and a small room, originally the office of the hotel's owner, a medical doctor.

The hotel's guest rooms are located on the second floor and under the mansard roof and open off a central corridor. Each of the ten rooms has a bathroom and a small sitting room. On the guest floors, the walls are plain plaster, the floors painted

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wood; the window and door trim is simple molding. Four-panel doors and old brass locksets remain in place.

The present appearance of the Hygeia House represents the combination of its original appearance at construction and two major renovations. Originally built in 1885, the hotel was moved to its present site in 1907. During and following the move, several changes were made. The new site was a much steeper grade than the old, and the basement level at the rear of the building became a full height floor with access at grade. A central cupola was removed. The hotel's porch was rebuilt--cutwork panels were replaced by turned balusters; turned porch columns were replaced with the current plain columns; and porch roof brackets were removed.

A second major renovation of the hotel occurred during and after 1998. Hygeia House had been neglected since the 1960s and left empty since 1980. A number of changes were made to meet modern building codes, to make the hotel economically viable, and to repair the damage of decades of neglect. A new stair tower was added to the east side of the building to replace a stair tower at the rear. A second interior chimney was added to the west side of the building; a fireplace and mantel were added to the first floor parlor. The hotel's sixteen guest rooms were converted to ten suites by partitioning several rooms to add private bathrooms and sitting rooms. Substantial portions of the porch were deteriorated and have been replaced to approximate the 1907 porch. All walls and ceilings were covered with wallboard; plaster ceiling medallions were removed from the first-floor rooms for later restoration; much of the interior trim was matched and replaced; insulated window sash has replaced the deteriorated older sash, but it is matched to the 1907 configuration.

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Photographs

Photographer: Tracey Dillon
Date: September 2000
Negatives: Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage
Commission, 150 Benefit Street, Providence, RI

The above information applies to all photographs

Photo #1
View: South (front) façade, east (side) elevation.

Photo #2
View: North (rear) elevation.

Photo #3
View: Stairhall, newel and balusters.

Photo #4
View: Parlor, first floor.

Photo #5
View: Third floor guest room.

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Significance

Hygeia House (1885, 1907) is a good example of the small hotels that were once an important part of the development and appearance of Block Island. Constructed during the heyday of Block Island's resort development, Hygeia House's history reflects some important patterns of the island's history as a vacation spot: the burst of hotel construction in the late nineteenth century as Block Island became a fashionable resort and its decline in the middle of the twentieth century. The story of Hygeia House reflects a minor theme in Block Island's history as a resort--the association of seaside vacations with health and vitality. In its physical form, Hygeia House is typical of the small hotels of its period.

The hotel was constructed in 1885 as the Seaside House about 150 yards south of its present location. It operated for about twenty years, its fifteen rooms regularly rented to summer visitors. In 1907, it was purchased by Dr. John C. Champlin, the island's physician, and also a hotelier. He moved the Seaside House up the road to its present location, on the grounds of his own hotel, the Hygeia. Champlin renamed the Seaside House the Hygeia Annex and used it for the overflow of guests from his much larger (125 rooms) and more luxurious hotel.

In 1916, the grand Hygeia burned; only the Annex was left. Dr. Champlin gamely moved his physician's office into the smaller building, renamed it the New Hygeia, advertised it as a salubrious island getaway, where sea breezes, fresh water, and clean air would restore health, and re-opened for business. He continued to operate at a much-reduced scale for several decades, even as Block Island became a less important summer resort.

In the mid-twentieth century, Hygeia House was operated as a rooming house for summer employees of other hotels by Champlin's heirs. The hotel fell into disrepair and was unoccupied during the 1980s and 90s. Recently, it has been rehabilitated by Champlin descendents and, once again, welcomes summer visitors, as Block Island has again become a popular summer spot.

The conjunction of the medical and hotel-keeping vocations was not rare in the late nineteenth and early twentieth

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centuries. While Block Island does not seem to have emphasized its healthy climate as a principal attraction (as did other resorts), it is a minor theme in the island's resort history. Dr. C. H. Hadley, whose imposing house still stands on the island, wrote a pamphlet in the 1880s titled, "Block Island as a Resort for Invalids," promoting the salubriety of the place. It was Dr. Hadley's practice which Champlin acquired in 1887. Nor was Champlin the only physician to also operate a hotel: Dr. Abby Vail, a New York physician, built a large sanitarium complex on the island which included a 3 ½-story hotel. The Vail Hotel has been demolished, but two small cottages (1885) from the sanitarium complex remain.

In its physical form, Hygeia House is typical of Block Island's small hotels: multi-story, with a wide porch and mansard roof, facing its view, it retains the image of a Block Island hotel. Though a moved building, it was moved early in its history and continued to operate as a hotel after the move. A number of changes have been made to the interior of the hotel to accommodate modern needs, but it still retains its exterior form and most of its materials, details, and design; the division of public rooms on the first floor and guest rooms on upper stories is still in place.

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Major Bibliographical References

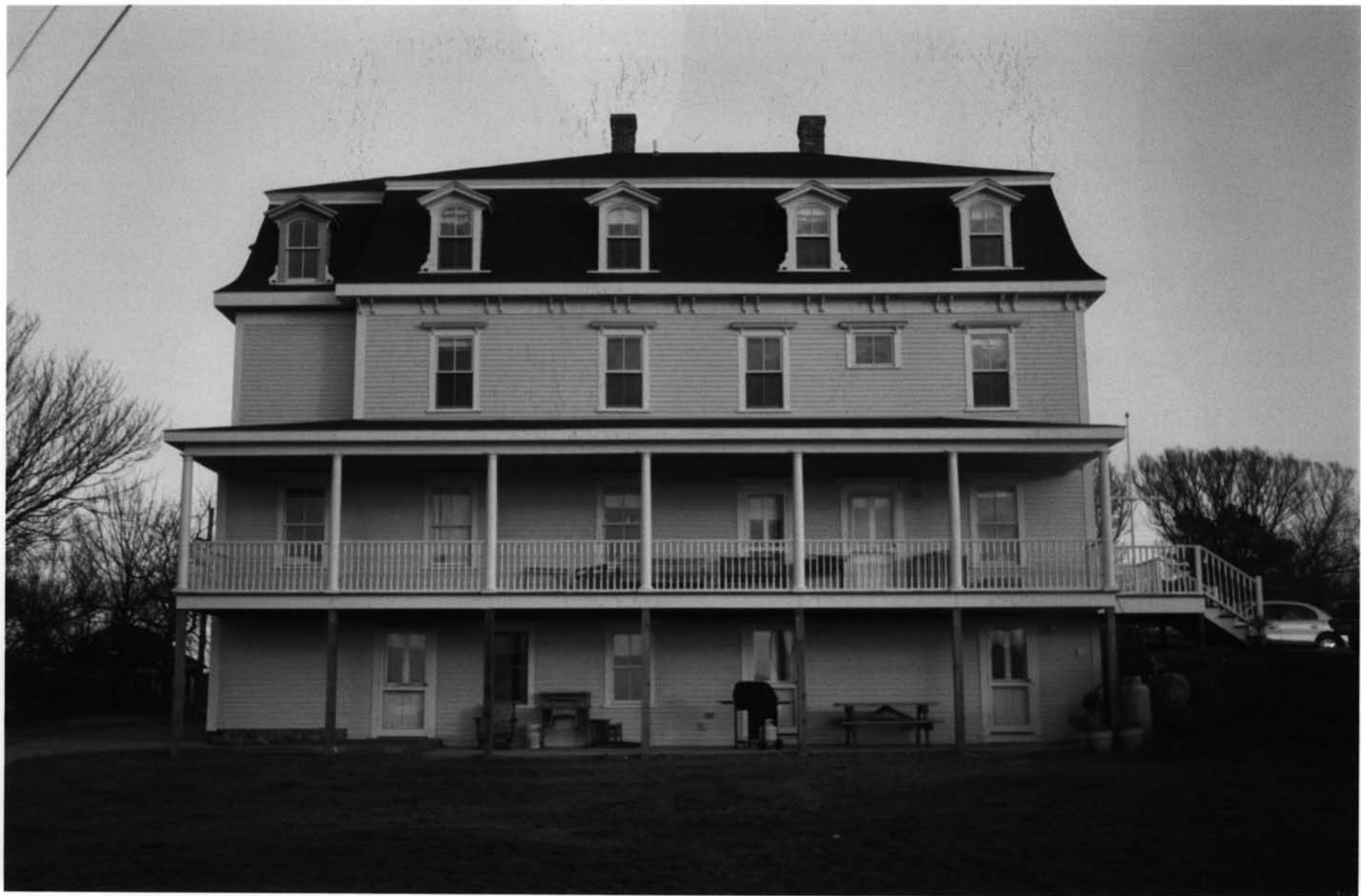
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Hygeia House
Washington County, New Shoreham, VT
Photo #1 of 5



*Hygeia House
Washington County, New Shoreham, RI
Photo #2 of 5*



*Hygeia House
Washington County, New Shoreham, RI
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Hygeia House
Washington County, New Shoreham, R.I.
Photo #4 of 5



Hygeia House
Washington County, New Shoreham, VT
Photo # 5 of 5

Hygeia House
Washington
County
New Shoreham
(Block Island), RI
19-284280-4561490

