

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

For HCRS use only
received _____
date entered _____

1. Name

historic District Schoolhouse #2

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Old Old Post Road (Route 1A) _____ not for publication

city, town Charlestown _____ vicinity of Cross Mills congressional district #2 (Rep. Edward Beard)

state Rhode Island code 44 county Washington code 009

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Charlestown Historical Society

street & number P.O. Box 318

city, town Charlestown _____ vicinity of _____ state Rhode Island 02813

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Town Hall

street & number Route 2

city, town Charlestown _____ state Rhode Island 02813

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Not so represented has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records

city, town _____ state _____

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site	
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved	date <u>6/13/73</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

District Schoolhouse #2, built in 1838, originally stood in the Quonochontaug area north of the Old Post Road in the town of Charlestown. In 1973 it, together with its original foundation stones, was moved about four miles to its present site, where it faces south on the still-rural Old Post Road in the Cross Mills section of the town. At that time it was restored, since it had not been used as a school since 1918, and, while remaining unaltered, had become dilapidated. Its present situation resembles in terrain its original one, as revealed by a nineteenth-century photograph: the school is set back on a flat grassed lot, not more than forty feet from the roadway; dry-laid fieldstone walls run along the front, up the western end of the lot, and across its back.

The school is a small (20.5 feet wide by 26 feet deep) clapboard-sheathed structure with a wood-shingled gable roof. It rests upon a foundation of rock-faced granite and has no cellar. Except for two small vestibules it contains only one room. The front elevation has a central window flanked by two doorways; there are three windows on each side elevation, and no opening at all in the rear wall. A single short, slim brick chimney rises through the peak of the roof near the building's front. A plain fascia board runs under the eaves and up the gables; door and window openings have plain flat-board enframements. Both doors are hung on strap-hinges and contain four flat inset panels, are fitted with thumb-latches, and have three-pane transoms. In front of each door are two large oblong granite blocks forming a "stoop" and a step--these, except for one replacement, also brought from Quonochontaug. Windows are double-hung, with six-over-six sash, and each is equipped with a single, strap-hinged board-and-batten shutter. The shutters do not show in a nineteenth century photograph of the school, although they appear in one taken in this century.) The building is painted white, found to be its original color; the two doors, window sash and shutters are black. Close to each side wall of the schoolhouse is a row of large flat drip stones--also brought from the old site.

On the interior there are two vestibules across the front, the smaller one for boys, and the larger (east) one with its window, for girls' use. The chimney projects from the rear wall of the larger vestibule, and both have wooden clothes-pegs on their walls. All remaining space is taken up by the nearly-square classroom. Here the original wide-board flooring remains, and door and window trim is as simple as that outside. A wainscot of narrow vertical boarding, believed to have been applied c. 1860-1870, runs around the room to window-sill height and is now painted its original blue, which was determined by scraping, as is all other woodwork. At the south end of the room it was found during restoration that an older wall exists behind the present one. The earlier wall has a red-stained wainscot of horizontal boards with plaster covered by two layers of early

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

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HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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wallpaper above; a section of this old wall has been left exposed, for the interest of visitors.

When paint was stripped from the north wall, marks were found showing the dimensions of the nineteenth-century benches built against it; these have been reproduced. Between the two doors to the vestibules the wall space is filled, above the wainscot and to the height of the doors, by a large blackboard. An iron wood-burning stove is set upon a large iron safety shield in a central location a few feet from the wall. Oil wall sconces have been hung, and there is a pendulum clock.

District Schoolhouse Number 2 in its original location had a privy behind it, but by 1973 this had disappeared. However, a two-seater, divided outhouse of suitable age and appearance was found elsewhere in Charlestown and has been placed to the northwest of the schoolhouse on its new site, in the same relative location as the old one. A flagpole, stands before the schoolhouse just as one is shown to have been placed in the nineteenth-century photograph.

This building, the only unaltered survivor of eight such schools in its community, was moved, restored and is carefully maintained by the Charlestown Historical Society and stands on land leased from the nearby Cross Mills Library. Since its arrival the schoolhouse has been provided with good surrounding landscaping treatment on the new site, including "teachers' gardens", a small planting of flowers between the entrance steps. As one looks at the schoolhouse today, it shows itself clearly as what it was in its beginnings and for eighty years thereafter and not as an extravagant, overly imaginative or overly embellished "restoration-interpretation" project.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

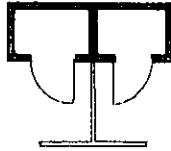
2

ITEM NUMBER

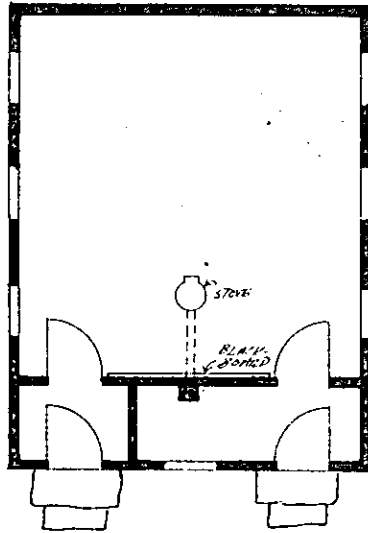
7

PAGE

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20' 6"



DISTRICT SCHOOLHOUSE #2
CHARLESTOWN, RHODE ISLAND
SITE PLAN
NOT TO SCALE

⊗ FLAGPOLE

OLD OLD POST ROAD

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Charlestown District Schoolhouse #2, recently moved and restored, is one of only three of the original eight schoolhouses in the town that still exist. The other two are now used as residences and have been drastically altered. District Schoolhouse #2, built in 1838, was in continuous operation as a school until 1918, when the town elementary school was opened. Since that time, this structure has been used as a 4-H club headquarters and as a residence. It has, however, not been substantially altered since about 1865 when the interior was refinished. The original walls still exist under the newer finishes; and a portion of them is exposed as part of the building's interpretation.

The schoolhouse was given to the Charlestown Historical Society in 1972, on the condition that it be moved. A search for a site similar to the original one and a drive to raise funds for the move followed. The Cross Mills Public Library agreed to lease the current site to the Society for a dollar a year for twenty years. On June 13, 1973, when enough money had been raised for the moving of the building and its foundation, it was relocated on the new site. The task of restoration was largely accomplished with volunteer help, and the finished building opened to the public on June 27, 1974.

As a rare survivor of a once-common building type, and as the focus of preservation activity in the town, the Charlestown District Schoolhouse #2 merits listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Mandeville, Frances W.: The Old Schoolhouse at Charlestown, R.I.
Charlestown, R.I., The Charlestown Historical Society, 1975.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than 1 acre

Quadrangle name Carolina

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	9	2	7	1	3	0	4	5	8	4	4	0	0
Zone	Easting			Northing									

B

Zone	Easting			Northing									

C

Zone	Easting			Northing									

D

Zone	Easting			Northing									

E

Zone	Easting			Northing									

F

Zone	Easting			Northing									

G

Zone	Easting			Northing									

H

Zone	Easting			Northing									

Verbal boundary description and justification

Champlin Lot, Old Post Road, Charlestown

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard B. Harrington

organization R.I. Historical Preservation Commission date September 18, 1979

street & number 150 Benefit Street telephone 401-277-2678

city or town Providence state Rhode Island

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Frank B. Williams

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date October 3, 1979

For HCRS use only. I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register	date
Keeper of the National Register	date
Attest:	date
Chief of Registration	



DISTRICT SCHOOLHOUSE #2
Charlestown, Rhode Island

Photographer: Warren Jagger

Date: April, 1977

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

View from the southeast

photograph #1



DISTRICT SCHOOLHOUSE #2
Charlestown, Rhode Island

Photographer: Warren Jagger

Date: April, 1977

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

Interior from the northwest

photograph #2