

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
Whitehall

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Berkeley (Bishop George) House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Perkeley Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Middletown

STATE: Rhode Island CODE: 38 COUNTY: Newport CODE: 005

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: Restricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No: <input type="checkbox"/>
Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/>			
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME:
Yale University (lessor to Society of Colonial Dames in America in the State of Rhode Island)

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: New Haven STATE: Connecticut CODE: 06

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Town Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Middletown STATE: Rhode Island CODE: 38

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey: Supplement, 1957.

DATE OF SURVEY: 1957 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: 08

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:
COUNTY:
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input type="checkbox"/>	Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/>	Ruins <input type="checkbox"/>	Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/>
INTEGRITY	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	Altered <input type="checkbox"/>	Unaltered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Moved <input type="checkbox"/>	Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Whitehall is commonly dated 1729; but it may have had its real beginnings before that year in that portion forming the rear of the present house and resembling a shed-like addition with its own central chimney. This portion may, on the other hand, have instead been added later to the larger conjoined structure which certainly was erected in 1729 for Dean (later Bishop) Berkeley.

In any case it is the 1729 structure which forms the more important part of the dwelling. This is of timber and clapboard construction, two storeys in height, topped by a hipped and ridged roof. Its interior plan is dictated by its central chimney. This last allows a small entry hall flanked by two major first-floor rooms (Red and Green Parlours) and small storage areas. The kitchen is contained in the rear extension. The stairway--now, at least--is placed in a side entry hall where the hip-roofed main house and shed-roofed rear part join. (It is thought that the quite small front entry could never have conveniently accommodated a stair.)

The only exterior adornments are a modillion cornice (twice replaced or restored) on three sides of the 1729 house and a large pedimented doorway centred between two of its four first-floor windows. This does not centre the entrance in plan, however, and so the door, which is apparently a wide double one, has only one operable leaf, opening into the entry--the inoperable leaf is backed by a parlour wall.

Over a long period of varied tenancies and uses, the house received some minor appendages (now removed) and alterations (now rectified) which did not affect its basic appearance or plan. Since 1899 the house has been under the care of The Society of Colonial Dames in America in the State of Rhode Island and maintenance has been constant. Restoration has been thoughtfully and expertly carried out, particularly in programs undertaken in 1936 and 1966-1968. Most of the interior trim is original (over-mantel panelling, bolection mouldings, fireplace tiles etc.) though a small amount of woodwork and a replacement staircase in the side entry were brought from old houses nearby.

The house is maintained as a museum, suitably furnished with pieces of its period. It has been painted inside and outside in colours of its period. A smaller structure which Berkeley had on his property, specifically to house his library, no longer exists, nor do any other accessory buildings.

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(Continuation Sheet)

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Description (continued)

From Architectural Heritage of Newport p. 439-440

George Berkeley Dean of Derry and later Bishop of Cloyne, spent three years in Rhode Island waiting for funds voted by Parliament with which to found St. Paul's College in Bermuda for the education of colonials and the New World Indians. Arrived January 23, 1729. On same ship, John Smibert, painter, and John James, architect.

House - Small house standing on site owned by Joseph Whipple. This house may be the present kitchen ell. Berkeley built the front part and perhaps whole house c 1729. Unpretentious center entry and chimney, hip roofed building with long sloping lean to across back that covers the kitchen ell which has its own chimney.

Berkeley left Newport in 1731 and deeded house and grounds to Yale in 1732. Within 12 years it had become an inn, known as Whitehall, and continued to be known as a Newport landmark. A picture drawn by Lieutenant Harwood USN c 1840 was included in Picturesque Illustrations of Rhode Island and the Town of Newport. By the 1870's the house considered a picturesque ruin, was receiving attention by the many summer residents and their architects who were creating a great summer resort in Newport. In this picturesque state, the building deserves mention because it was one of the buildings that aroused interest in the colonial architecture of Newport, and thus was influential in the general turn to Colonial Revival in the 1880's.

In 1899 the Colonial Dames secured a 999 year lease from Yale and at that time undertook a restoration of the building. A second restoration under the supervision of Norman Morrison Isham was begun in 1936. The original modillion cornice was replaced in 1900 and the arrangement of the wide front door and the location of the original stairway are still not fully understood but the house has been restored with great care and the 1936 work has been precisely documented.

Because of its immediate English origin, an original oddity of plan, and later changes, the building presents certain unsolved problems, but it is one of the very fine restorations of the state. The two-story house with its central chimney, high roof hipped back to a ridge, and long lean-to has been painted the old Spanish brown color common to early eighteenth-century dwellings. The peculiarity of the wide divided front doorway, half of which is false and extends beyond the parlor wall at the left is still unexplained. If there has been any change, it must have been made early because Harwood's drawing shows that the arrangement was in existence then.

The original modillion cornice was placed in 1900. The new one is slightly smaller in scale, and is unusual in that the windows are set some six inches below it and do not break into it.

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) -2-

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Description (continued)

From Architectural Heritage of Newport p. 439-440

The space in the entry hall where the stairway normally should be is not supposed to be large enough to allow stairs, but a back side hall between the east parlor and the so-called Dean's study has evidently served as a stair hall for many years. Ninyon Challoner's house of 1735 had such a side-hall plan. The staircase now installed here is not original, but it came from an old Newport house.

The red parlor at the right and the green room at the left have been restored to their early appearance, with their early bolection paneled chimney breasts. The seventeenth-century tiles surrounding the fireplace in the red room came from Holland. The framed green tree tiles in the green room were part of the original fireplace tiles that the Berkeleys installed. The old paneling in the study was installed in the 1900 reclamation, but the tiles around this fireplace are original. The present kitchen, with its mammoth brick fireplace in which the oven is set in the back wall, may be the house Joseph Whipple sold the Dean in 1729. The slave quarters for the three slaves Berkeley bought in Newport, and a kitchen fireplace, were located in the cellar. There is also evidence that the Dean's library was housed in a little separate building, the one that the Reverend Andrew Burnaby, writing in his diary in 1759, reported was then being converted into a dairy.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Pre-Columbian 16th Century 18th Century 20th Century
 15th Century 17th Century 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1729

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal	Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Political	<input type="checkbox"/>	Urban Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prehistoric	Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/>	Religion/Phi-		Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Historic	Industry	<input type="checkbox"/>	losophy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Agriculture	Invention	<input type="checkbox"/>	Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Art	Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sculpture	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Commerce	Architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Social/Human-		_____	
Communications	Literature	<input type="checkbox"/>	itarian	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
Conservation	Military	<input type="checkbox"/>	Theater	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	
	Music	<input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

"GEORGE BERKELEY
(1685-1753)

"Irish patriot, eminent divine, early American philanthropist, master of English prose, and profound philosopher, at the age of 28, in 1710, George Berkeley completed The Principles of Human Knowledge, 'one of the most astounding contributions ever made by any man to philosophical thought.' He landed at Newport on Rhode Island in 1729, while on his way to found a college in Bermuda. Remaining at Newport until 1732, he wrote there a refutation of Deism entitled Alciphron, Or, The Minute Philosopher, and helped to found a Philosophical Society, which became the basis for the celebrated Redwood Library. During his Rhode Island sojourn, the Dean of Derry lived in a farmhouse in the present Middletown, which he presented to Yale College at the time of his return to England to become Bishop of Cloyne. The divine also made studies of the theory of vision and he distinguished between primary and secondary qualities of matter. 'There is no corporeal or material substance: it remains therefore that the cause of ideas is an incorporeal active substance, or spirit.' Berkeley declared that not only matter, but the Newtonian conceptions of time, space, and motion were inconceivable. His principal American disciple was Samuel Johnson of Stratford, Conn., later first president of King's (Columbia) College in New York.

"One of the most distinguished Europeans who ever dwelt in America, George Berkeley figured prominently in our history. Both for its own merits as a fine example of 18th-century rural New England architecture, and as a residence of a truly great world figure, Whitehall deserves to be preserved.

"Carl Bridenbaugh."
(signed)

The house also has an importance in having much attracted those architects who visited and sketched around Newport in the late XIX Century, engendering our "Colonial Revival" style.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet) - 3 -

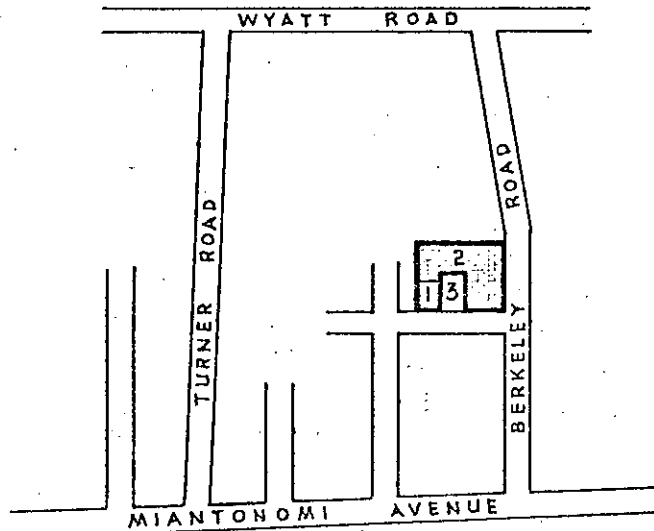
STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

7. Description: Addendum

Whitehall was built by Bishop Berkeley expressly as a country retreat on 96 pastoral acres. Today only a little more than half an acre of the original tract of land has been preserved along with the house by the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of Rhode Island (both house and land are on lease until the year 2000 from Yale University, Berkeley's legatee in his will). The Colonial Dames have successfully landscaped this property in keeping with the period of the house, and they have recently arranged for visitors' parking on the south side of the entrance drive so that automobiles will not come up to the house itself.

Most of Bishop Berkeley's original and sizeable tract of land has been altered by real estate development, and unfortunately a highly incongruous modern house stands adjacent to the eastern property line of the present Whitehall land. However, to the north and east of the half-acre on which Whitehall is located there remain approximately eight acres of open, unspoilt country land which enhance the Whitehall site and give an indication of the rural area it once dominated. As these acres provide a good period background for Whitehall and provide some protection against encroaching development, the 1969 National Register nomination (which gives no acreage figure) should be amended to specifically include this land.



- KEY -



- 1 WHITEHALL
- 2 EIGHT ACRES OF UNDEVELOPED LAND
- 3 PRIVATELY OWNED PROPERTY

VICINITY MAP ~ WHITEHALL ~ MIDDLETOWN, R. I.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) -3-

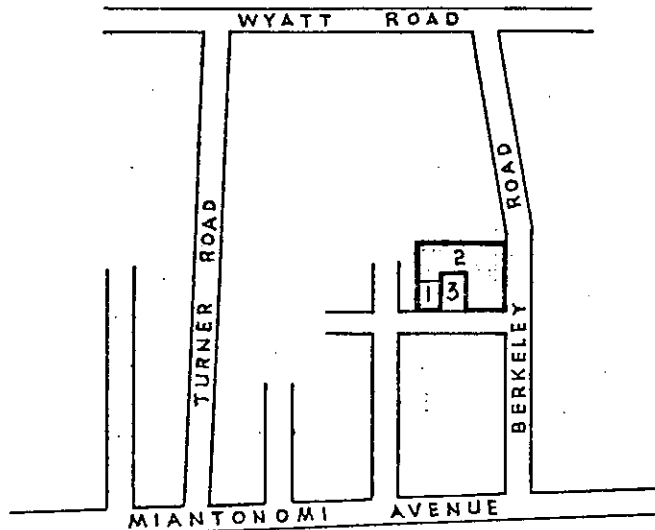
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NO SCALE

VICINITY MAP ~ WHITEHALL ~ MIDDLETOWN, R. I.

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Benjamin Rand: Berkeley's American Sojourn. (Cambridge, Mass., 1932.)
 John Wild: George Berkeley; a study of his life and his philosophy.
 (Cambridge, Mass., 1936.)
 Antoinette F. Downing: Early Homes of Rhode Island (Richmond, Virginia,
 1937), pp. 107, 113; 85, 128, 132, 134, 175, 177.
 Antoinette F. Downing and Vincent J. Scully, Jr.: The Architectural
 Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, 1640-1915 (Cambridge, Mass, 1952),
 pp. 84, 172-174; pl. 85, 86, 193.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "		41°	30'	47" N
NE	° ' "	° ' "		71°	16'	19" W
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
 Richard P. Harrington

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island State Historical Preservation Commission

DATE: Nov. 22, 1969

STREET AND NUMBER:
 24, Meeting Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence

STATE: Rhode Island

CODE: 38

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 _____

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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 _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

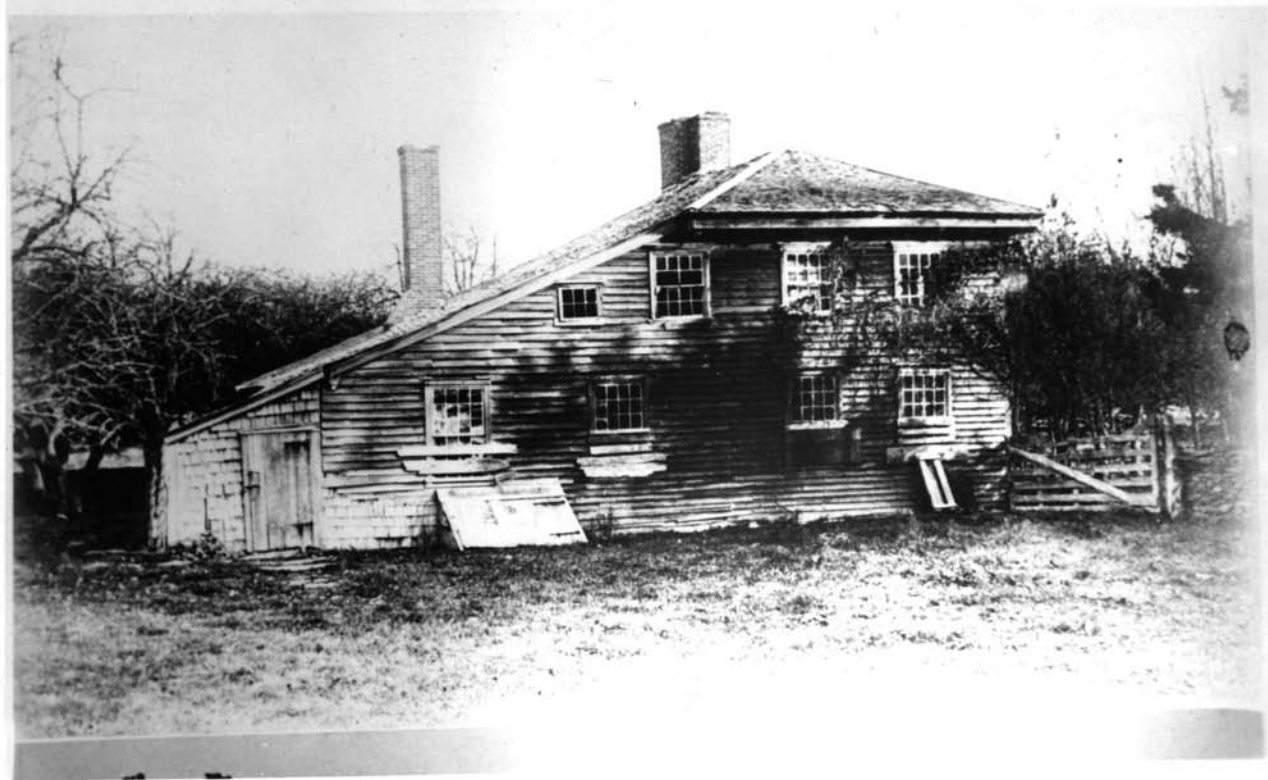
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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

Rhode Island	
COUNTY	
Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON: Whitehall			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Berkeley (Bishop George) House			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: Berkeley Avenue			
CITY OR TOWN: Middletown			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Rhode Island	38	Newport	005
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT: Bob Hyssong			
DATE OF PHOTO: c. 1955			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Copy negative: Whitehall, Berkeley Avenue, Middletown, Rhode Island			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. exterior from south-west			



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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COMMON: Whitehall

AND/OR HISTORIC: Berkeley (Bishop George) House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

Berkeley Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:

Middletown

STATE:

Rhode Island

CODE

38

COUNTY:

Newport

CODE

005

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Society of Colonial Dames in America in the State of Rhode Island

DATE OF PHOTO: c. 1898

NEGATIVE FILED AT: Roberts Studio, The Arcade, Providence, Rhode Island

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

view from west before restoration



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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Rhode Island

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Berkeley Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:

Middletown

STATE:

Rhode Island

CODE

38

COUNTY:

Newport

CODE

005

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Preservation Society of Newport County, Newport, R. I.

DATE OF PHOTO: 1958

NEGATIVE FILED AT: John T. Hopf, 10, Red Cross Terrace, Newport, R. I.

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Red Parlour



Rhode Island

COUNTY

Newport

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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38

COUNTY:

Newport

CODE

005

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Preservation Society of Newport County, Newport, R. I.

DATE OF PHOTO: c. 1958-1960

NEGATIVE FILED AT: John T. Hopf, 10, Red Cross Terrace, Newport, R. I.

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Green Parlour