

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park 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 NPS use only
received _____
date entered _____

1. Name

historic Peleg Champlin House

and/or common Peleg Champlin House

2. Location

street & number Fire # 918, Rodman Pond Lane \_\_\_\_\_ not for publication

city, town New Shoreham, Block Island vicinity of #2 - Rep. Claudine Schneider  
congressional district

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Dr. Gerald Abbott and Mr. Phillip Wilson/Charleston Property Associates

street & number P.O. Box 1162

city, town New York \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state New York 10150

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. New Shoreham Town Hall

street & number N.A.

city, town New Shoreham \_\_\_\_\_ state Rhode Island

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

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed	(minor)	date _____

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Peleg Champlin House is a simple, shingled, story-and-a-half, gabled-roofed, center-chimney house (c. 1820) with a slightly later, one-story, gable-roofed ell attached at the western corner of its north (rear) side. It stands, with one outbuilding, a somewhat altered nineteenth-century barn, on three acres of the original tract of Peleg Champlin's farm overlooking Block Island Sound to the northwest. A dry-laid rubblestone wall east, south, and west of the house encloses it in a grassy yard. A similar stone wall, together with the barn and stone foundations of other outbuildings, forms a barnyard northeast of the house. The house is one of the most intact from the early nineteenth century on Block Island and its immediate setting of rolling open fields defined by stone walls provides an historic and visual foil for it.

The house is set back from Coast Guard Road and is reached by a narrow unpaved cartway, Rodman Pond Lane; a dirt driveway leads into the yard from the lane. Although there are modern houses northeast and southwest of the house, most of the surrounding land, particularly to the northwest, remains open and is covered with a low, thick, overgrowth. The owners are presently negotiating to buy an additional tract of 6 acres, stretching from just behind the barn northwest to the shore of Block Island Sound, which was part of Peleg Champlin's original farm. This tract is an important corridor of undeveloped open land, among the last remaining along the western coast of the island.

The exterior walls as well as the roofs of the main house and the ell are shingled, as is the barn. There are plain, painted cornerboards and ridgeboards and both plain and simply molded cornice boards on the gable ends. The foundations are rubblestone masonry, as is the chimney support. There is a single cellar, under the east parlor, which is reached through a bulkhead on the eastern side of the house. The main house has a central brick chimney that has been rebuilt without historical accuracy. A photograph of the house from the turn of the century shows in the center of the ell a small brick chimney, presumably a stove flue, that has since been removed. The same photograph shows that the shingled walls were formerly whitewashed.

The south-facing facade has a central doorway flanked by two pairs of windows. Around the door there is a simply molded surround and, above it, a four-pane transom. The gable ends are two bays deep with a pair of windows on the upper and the lower stories. The original 6/6 double-hung sash windows have been replaced by 2/2 windows on the first story while they remain on the second story. There is a small 4/2 double-hung sash window in the kitchen pantry and a single four-pane sash lighting the garret in the west gable end.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

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Continuation sheet 1

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An interesting feature of the house's exterior is the arrangement of the gutters. On the north and south eaves the wooden gutter troughs are canted so as to send their water into an underground cistern through a symmetrical Y of drain pipe on the east gable end. The cistern is not presently in use. The remains of another cistern under the ell indicate that these gutters formerly operated in the same manner.

The house has a floor plan which, in its broad outlines, is commonly seen in center-chimney houses. A shallow entry containing a two-run stairway occupies the center bay in front of the chimney stack. On either side of the entry are the two main parlors, each with a decorative mantel. On the north side of the chimney and running across the rear of the house is the kitchen with its large plain mantel. On the eastern end of the kitchen there is a small buttery or pantry with its original shelving, as well as a larger pantry or chamber which is entered only from the east parlor. On the western side of the kitchen there is an enclosed single-run rear stairway and, west of that, another chamber which can also be entered from the west parlor. The small square landing or hall at the foot of the rear stairs provides access to this chamber and to the rear ell. The ell contains two adjoining rooms each with a doorway and a pair of windows on the east facade. There are three windows and a single door on the west facade.

The second floor has a single large chamber with a mantel for a stove on the east side of the chimney. A somewhat smaller chamber runs the length of the west gable. A narrow central hall runs between these two rooms, with a jog around the chimney. On the south side of this hall is the open front stairway and a small square room lit by a window onto the western chamber. On the north side there is a slightly smaller room similarly lit by a window onto the eastern chamber, as well as a large closet and the enclosed rear stairway. With the exception of the large closet, which has vertical board walls with patches of various wall papers, these rooms have plaster and lath partitions that do not appear to date from the construction of the house.

The house has pegged heavy timber frame with vertical board sheathing. The presence of both adzed and vertically sawn members in the framing, particularly in the roof rafters, suggests that some of the adzed members were being reused, which seems probable in light of Block Island's early deforestation. With the exception of the kitchen where the plaster ceiling has been removed and the joists are exposed, the corner posts are the only visible elements of the framing, and they are boxed in beaded sheathing.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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The interior of the house is finished with plastered walls and ceilings. Except in the kitchen, where there is vertical board wainscoting, there are molded chair rails and baseboards throughout the house (though the woodwork on the second floor seems to have been added later). The fireplaces in the two parlors are the most prominent decorative features. The wooden mantels are basically the same: tall, slender, pilasters, fluted in the east parlor and channeled in the west, support a broad frieze with a central panel and a projecting mantelpiece. The composition reflects the freer and more sophisticated use of classical elements during the Federal period while the execution displays the simple forthrightness of traditional carpentry. Two other apparently original features of note are a closet cupboard in the west parlor, located under the rear stairway, and a small cupboard with a glazed door built into the north wall of the east parlor. There are two other small closets in the house, one under the front stairway in the entry and the other in the wainscoting on the west wall of the kitchen, under the rear stairway. The doors in the front of the house are all four-panelled; those in the kitchen and on the rear facades are two-board, battened doors. In addition to the changes already noted there have been a few more alterations. The small chamber in the northwest corner of the first story has been converted into a bathroom, though its woodwork is largely undisturbed. Under the windows in the east parlor previous owners installed space heaters and in the west parlor they replaced the single window with a three-pane picture window bay. The present owners are now considering restoring both the windows and the chimneys to their original appearance.

The barn is the only extant outbuilding, and it has been altered. It is a rectangular one-and-a-half story building with a gable roof and a central gable-roofed dormer on the southern slope. A new dormer was added recently on the north slope. The ground floor has been paved with concrete and serves as a garage and workshop. The upper story has been converted into an apartment.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input 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 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 . ca. 1820                      Builder/Architect                      Unknown

## Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Peleg Champlin House is a fine example of Block Island vernacular architecture and one of the best-preserved houses from the Federal era on the island. As such it is of considerable local significance and it could also be of value in analyzing the relationship of the island's architecture to that of the rest of the state.

### History

Peleg Champlin was born circa 1800 on Block Island, the second of three sons born to Nathaniel Champlin and Thankfull Hull Champlin. The Reverend S.T. Livermore in his history of Block Island traced the residence of the Champlin family on Block Island to Henry Champlin who moved there from Westerly, Rhode Island in 1780.<sup>1</sup>

On his mother's side, Peleg was related to the Hulls, one of the island's leading families during the eighteenth century. His grandfather, Captain Edward Hull, was a prominent landowner who represented Block Island in the Assembly both before and after the Revolution. It was on land inherited by his mother and his uncle from Captain Hull that Peleg established his farm with his new wife, Lucy Ann Dunn, circa 1820.

There is scant information on Peleg's life, except for the general impression that he had a long and prosperous career as a farmer. In his 1857 sketch of Block Island Henry Beckwith estimated that the Champlins were one of the three richest families on the island.<sup>2</sup> Twenty years later Reverend Livermore, in his history, referred to Peleg and his two brothers as "aged, well-to-do, and highly esteemed citizens." Peleg's two sons, Edward and Weeden, are described in the same account as "excellent farmers."<sup>3</sup>

Upon Peleg's death in December, 1880, the farm passed into the joint ownership of Edward and Weeden. In 1900 Weeden purchased his brother's share in the thirty-five acre parcel which included seven lots: the "Charlestown Meadow", "Tiddyman Hull Meadow", "Well Lot",

<sup>1</sup> S.T. Livermore, History of Block Island. 1877, reprinted 1961. p. 325.  
<sup>2</sup> Henry Beckwith, The History of Block Island. Providence, 1857. p. 6.  
<sup>3</sup> S.T. Livermore, History of Block Island. 1877, reprinted 1961. p. 326.

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"House and barn lot", "Garden" and "Pond Lots" and the "Burnt Swamp Lot."<sup>4</sup> This parcel of land was bounded at the time by lands owned jointly and separately by the two brothers on three out of four sides. To the east of these lands was the Champlin homestead, established by Nathaniel Champlin and occupied by Peleg's older brother Uriah during his lifetime. All of these holdings suggest the extent to which the Champlin family held domain over the land between the southwestern bank of the Great Salt Pond and the Grace Cove on the island's western shore.

Weeden Champlin undoubtedly continued to farm the property but it is not clear how long the farm remained active after his death. In 1906 Mary Hull Champlin Ball inherited the house from her uncle Weeden, who had remained a bachelor. The house continued to be passed down through family ownership until 1973; in 1981 it was acquired by the present owners as a vacation home.

<sup>4</sup> Town of New Shoreham Land Evidence Book 18, page 87.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Henry T. Beckwith, The History of Block Island. Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, 1857.  
 Rev. S.T. Livermore, History of Block Island, Rhode Island. 1877, reprinted The Murray Printing Co., Forge Village, Mass., 1961.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 3 acres

Quadrangle name Block Island

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A 

1	9	2	8	2	4	6	0	4	5	6	2	8	8	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** Plot 19, Lot 39 (2 acres) and Plot 19, Lot 40, Parcel A (1 acre). The boundaries were defined to include the Peleg Champlin House and Barn and that portion of Peleg Champlin's farm land surrounding them which is owned by Charleston Property Associates.

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

state N.A. code county code

state code county code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Richard Greenwood with Dr. Gerald Abbott

organization Private Consultant

date September 7, 1982

street & number 48 Carrington Avenue

telephone 401-751-8005

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 National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Frederick C. Williams*

title

date April 19, 1982

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

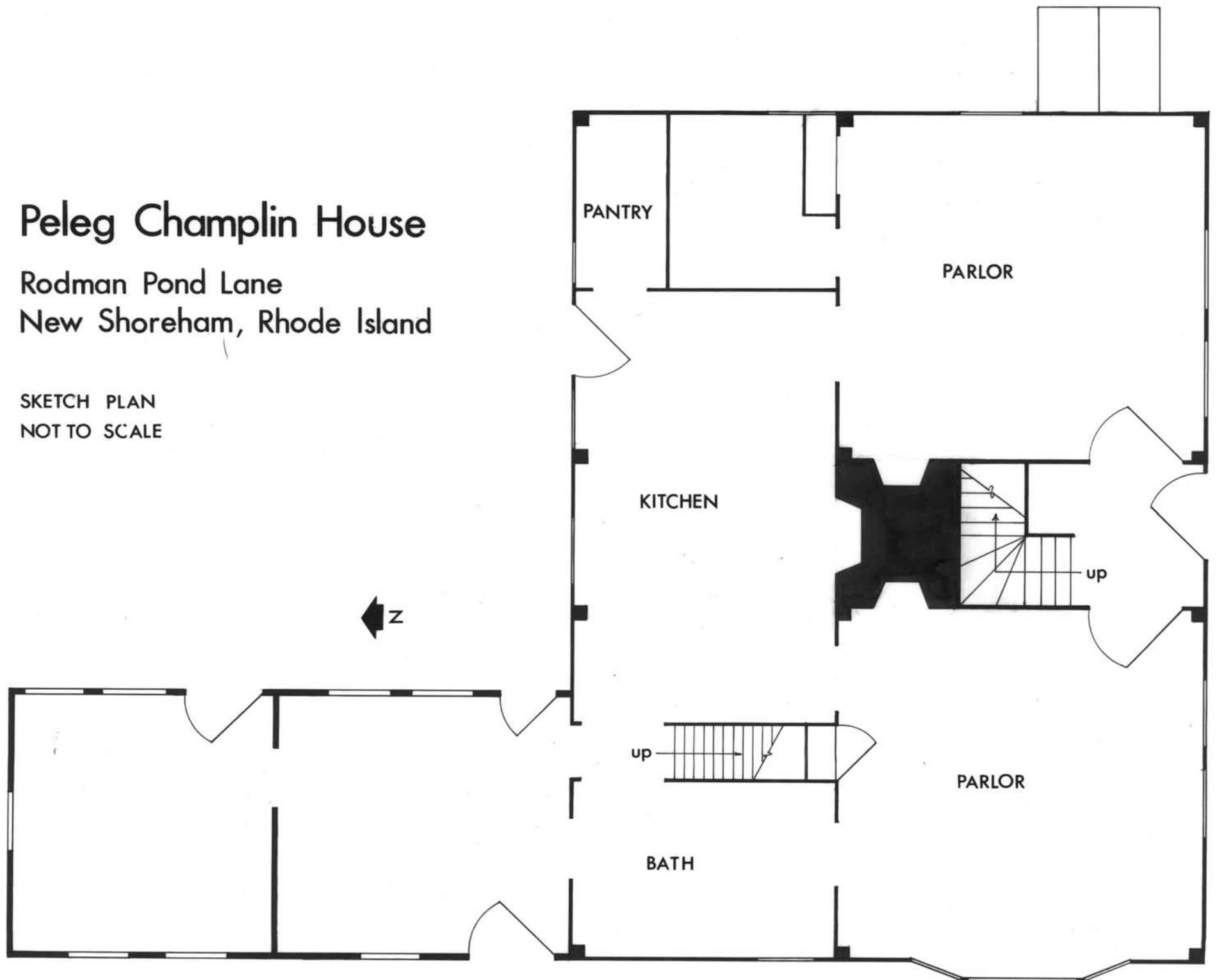
date

Chief of Registration

# Peleg Champlin House

Rodman Pond Lane  
New Shoreham, Rhode Island

SKETCH PLAN  
NOT TO SCALE





Peleg Champlin House  
Rodman Pond Lane  
New Shoreham, Block Island, Rhode Island

Photographer: Terence Abbott  
Date: August 1981  
Negative filed at: Dr. Gerald Abbott

View of the south (front) facade and east gable end;  
note transom above front door, "Y" of gutters on  
gable end, and rear ell.

Photo #1



Peleg Champlin House  
Rodman Pond Lane  
New Shoreham, Block Island, Rhode Island

Photographer: Terence Abbott  
Date: August 1981  
Negative filed at: Dr. Gerald Abbott

View of the north (rear) facade of the house from  
the former barnyard.

Photo #2



Peleg Champlin House  
Rodman Pond Lane  
New Shoreham, Block Island, Rhode Island

Photographer: Terence Abbott  
Date: August 1981  
Negative filed at: Dr. Gerald Abbott

View of mantel in east parlor.

Photo #3



Peleg Champlin House  
Rodman Pond Lane  
New Shoreham, Block Island, Rhode Island

Photographer: Terence Abbott  
Date: August 1981  
Negative filed at: Dr. Gerald Abbott

View of glazed china cupboard in east parlor and  
small room opening off parlor.

Photo #4

Peleg Champlin House  
New Shoreham (Block Island)  
Rhode Island

19 282460 4562880

