

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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date entered

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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

1. Name

historic Wesleyan Avenue Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Wesleyan Avenue between Taylor and Broad Streets not for publication
and adjacent sections of those streets.

city, town Providence No. 2 Rep. Claudine Schneider
vicinity of congressional district

state Rhode Island code 44 county Providence code 007

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	N.A. 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 Various -- see owners list in Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission files.

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Providence City Hall

street & number 25 Dorrance Street

city, town Providence state Rhode Island 02903

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title South Providence has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date September 1978 federal state county local

depository for survey records Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street

city, town Providence state Rhode Island 02903

7. Description

Condition

excellent

good

fair

deteriorated

ruins

unexposed

Check one

unaltered

altered

Check one

original site

moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Wesleyan Avenue Historic District consists of 25 houses located along one block of Wesleyan Avenue from Broad to Taylor streets. It is an exclusively residential district of large Victorian houses set slightly back from the sidewalk on modest sized lots. Most of the houses were built between 1875 and 1900 as single-family dwellings, and most are at least two stories high and of frame construction. The houses range in architectural style from Second Empire through Stick Style, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival to twentieth-century bungalows and tenements. Most are well preserved, although some have had artificial siding applied over the original cladding.

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

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

For HCRS use only
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date entered

Continuation sheet 1

Item number 7

Page 2

Inventory of Buildings in the Wesleyan Avenue Historic District
Contributing

Broad Street

- 593 (Plat 44, Lot 200) Edward E. Darling House (1881). A 2½-story, Gothic house with gable timbering, Eastlake window detailing and sawn porch ornament. Darling was a bookkeeper employed on South Water Street at the offices of the Rumford Chemical Works. Many of the fine houses built on or near Broad Street in the 1880s were owned by men whose occupations were listed as book-keeper, or clerk, an indication of the high status and salaries of management-level workers at that period.
- 596 (Plat 45, Lot 12) George H. Busiel House (1900). A 2½-story, Queen Anne house with a corner tower and a fine Colonial Revival veranda, notable for its very complex massing. Busiel was a book-keeper who became treasurer of both the American Wood Paper Company and the Continental Steamboat Company as well as secretary of the Earl P. Mason Land Company before building this elaborate house in 1900. (Fig. 1).
- 601 (Plat 44, Lot 383) Robert E. Smith House (1882). A 2½-story, elaborately ornamented, Stick Style house with iron cresting, extensive pseudo-structural gable timbering and a jigsaw-work porch. One of the finest suburban houses on Broad Street, it was built by the prosperous owner of the R.E. Smith Coal and Wood Company at South Water and Weybosset streets. Smith was active in city politics and served as Commissioner of Public Works during the period when Elmwood Avenue was rebuilt and Blackstone Boulevard was planned. Recent alterations have obscured much of the fine detailing.
- 603 (Plat 44, Lot 300). George H. Smith House (c. 1899). A 1½-story gambrel-roofed house notable for its Colonial Revival detailing including Palladian windows and gambrel-roofed dormers. George Smith was a partner in Beamen and Smith Machine Tool Manufacturers whose plant at 20 Gordon Avenue is now part of the Providence Lithograph Complex. Smith was related to his neighbors, the R.E. Smiths, and his house was built on part of the original grounds of their house.

Taylor Street

- 34-36 (Plat 45, Lot 238). Nathan Horowitz three-decker (c. 1910). A typical, 3½-story, end-gable-roofed, clapboard-and-shingle, three-family house with a 2-story Tuscan columned porch.

(See Continuation Sheet #2).

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For HCRS use only
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date entered

Continuation sheet 2

Item number 7

Page 3

- 38-40 (Plat 45, Lot 239) House (c. 1880). A 2½-story, mansard-roofed, clapboard, two-family house with a gabled, 2-story, square bay window, a steep gable containing a pointed window and a coved cornice over the entrance pavilion. The paired entrances probably originally were sheltered by a porch or hood that has been removed. This house is an unusual variation on the standard design two-family house of the period. (Fig. 2).
- 44 (Plat 45, Lot 240). Francis F. Leckie House (c. 1890). A 2½-story, mansard-roof, clapboard, two-family house with a bracketed cornice and a two-story canted bay window next to the hooded entrance on the front. (Fig. 2).
- 46 (Plat 45, Lot 309) Francis F. Leckie House (c. 1890). A 2½-story, mansard-roof, shingle two-family house with a modillion cornice. Originally similar to 44, the house assumed its present appearance in the early 1900s when it was converted into a three-family dwelling.

Wesleyan Avenue

- 1-3 (Plat 45, Lot 368) Thomas Gilliese House (1892). A 2½-story, cross-gable-roof, Queen Anne house with a spindlework porch. The aluminum siding probably covers a much more elaborately ornamented clapboard-and-shingle house.
- 2-4 (Plat 45, Lot 310) Frederick L. Booth House (1895). A typical, 2½-story, end-gable-roof, Queen Anne, two-family house. This plain house has been stripped of its detailing, except for the simple spindlework porch, and is now covered with asbestos siding.
- 9 (Plat 45, Lot 205) Eugene M. Sawin House (1890). One of a pair of 1½-story, cross-gable-roof, clapboard-and-shingle, Queen Anne houses notable for their complex massing, elaborate foliated relief ornament and curved-glass oriel windows.
- 15 (Plat 45, Lot 206) Eugene M. Sawin House (1890). The twin to 9 Wesleyan, this elaborate Queen Anne house is notable for its complex massing, gable ornaments and oriel windows. The importance of surface texture is emphasized by the imbricated shingling and rusticated brickwork. Sawin was a partner in John M. Dean and Company, dealers in house furnishings, at 321 High Street when he built number 15 for his own residence and number 9 for rental purposes. (Fig. 3).
- 16 (Plat 45, Lot 313) Freelove Glines House (1896). A large, 2½-story cross-gable-roofed, Queen Anne, two-family house with a 1-story porch across the front, a pedimented paired window on the second

(See Continuation Sheet #3).

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**National Register of Historic Places
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Continuation sheet 3

Item number 7

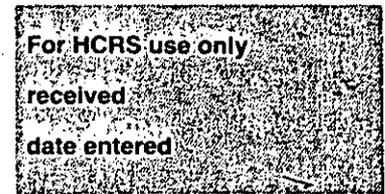
Page 4

- story and a 3-story, octagonal, conical-roofed corner tower. The house's original clapboard-and-shingle cladding and all of its exterior ornament and moldings are covered by aluminum siding.
- 21 (Plat 45, Lot 207) Walter F. Slade House (1902). A 2½-story, end-gambrel-roof, clapboard, Colonial Revival house with a deep, fully glazed oriel window cantilevered from the second floor of the gambrel end facing the street, and Colonial detailing including a Palladian window and a side entrance porch with ramped balustrades (Fig. 4).
- 24 (Plat 45, Lot 315) Eva S. Dean House (1894). A 2½-story, dormered-hip-roof, shingle house with a deep Colonial Revival porch wrapping around the front and side and timbered soffits under the very wide roof overhang. (Fig. 5).
- 25 (Plat 45, Lot 208) Augustine H. Downing House (1910). A 2½-story, jerkin-gable-roof, shingle house with exposed rafter ends, a very large shed dormer on the front slope of the roof, and unusual Gothic wooden tracery, and bargeboards on the elaborate projecting front-door vestibule and on the deep open porch spanning the west side of the house. This simple, Bungalow-like-suburban house is unusual for the very handsomely carved Gothic detailing, particularly on the glazed front vestibule which appears to have been an open porch originally. Downing was a lawyer with his office in Grosvenor Building at 10 Weybosset Street. (Fig. 4).
- 28 (Plat 45, Lot 316) Livermore P. Hopkinson House (1892). A large, 2½-story, hip-roof, clapboard house with an elaborate curved Colonial Revival porch wrapping around the front and side and timbered soffits under the very wide roof overhang; similar in design to number 24 next door. The porch has lost its original columns and roof balustrade, although it retains part of the finely turned balustrade around the first-story porch and steps. The hipped-dormer in the front with its leaded upper sash and projecting hood supported by colonnettes is a handsome feature of this house.
- 32 (Plat 45, Lot 317) Amasa C. Tourtellot House (1881). A long, narrow, rectangular, 2½-story, bellcast-mansard-roof house with gabled dormers, a dentil and modillion cornice, balustrade-topped 1-story bay windows, and a hooded entrance. The original clapboards are now covered with asbestos shingling on the first floor and asphalt shingling on the second floor. (Fig. 6).
- 35 (Plat 45, Lot 211) William H. Sawyer House (1891). A 2½-story, end-gable-roof, clapboard-and-shingle, Queen Anne house with several bay windows, a spindlework entrance porch with a festoon frieze, and a projecting front gable with fish-scale shingling and a foliated panel at the peak.

(See Continuation Sheet #4).

United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet 4

Item number 7

Page 5

- 40-42 (Plat 45, Lot 318) Herbert W. Greene House (1881). A symmetrical, 1½-story, mansard-roofed, clapboard, duplex with hipped dormers, a boss frieze under the eaves, and paired central entrances unified by a common shed-roofed door porch flanked by matching bay windows. This is a well-preserved, rare example of a side-by-side duplex; the horizontally divided two-family house, like 2-4 or 16 Wesleyan Avenue, was more usual. Herbert W. Greene was a partner in A. Crawford Greene and Son, Printers and Publishers, who published the General Advertiser, The Weekly Gazette, The City Tax Book, and the Rhode Island Farmer's Almanac. (Fig. 7).
- 43 (Plat 45, Lot 212) Phebe W. Gardiner House (1889). A plain, boxy, 2½-story, hip-roofed, clapboard house with a pair of pedimented dormers on the front slope of the roof connected by a blind balustrade panel and a lunette window; a modillion cornice; a deep bowed porch projecting from the facade with closely spaced, delicately turned balusters; and rusticated brick foundations. (Fig. 8).
- 45 (Plat 45, Lot 213) Corra M. Barry House (1927). A plain, boxy, 2-story, low-hip-roof house with a projecting one-story front wing containing the entrance porch. The banded wood shingling is the most distinctive feature of this austere house.
- 48 (Plat 45, Lot 32) Adolphus J.F. Behrends House (1880-81). A finely detailed, eclectically designed, 2½-story, cross-gable-roof, clapboard house with a bracketed cornice and trim on the two-story bay window and entrance porch, sawn bargeboards in the gables and on the gabled dormers, a projecting bracketed hood over the paired windows above the entrance, and a fine patterned slate roof.
- 53 (Plat 45, Lot 214) Samuel B. Darling House (1885). A very large and elaborately detailed 2½-story, deck-on-hip-roof, clapboard-and-shingle, Stick Style dwelling with rusticated granite foundations, elaborate wall surface articulation with applied nailing boards, paneling, and fancy-shingle panels; and Modern Gothic detailing including bargeboards in the gables, pent-roof dormers, and an intricately carved 2-story porch of exceptional complexity. One of the more unusual and best preserved eclectic late nineteenth-century houses in Providence, it was built for Darling, a partner in Brown and Sharpe, who moved here from Prospect Street. He retired from business in 1894 and devoted his time to campaigning against compulsory vaccination until his death in 1900. His only child, Mary Ella Jackson, subsequently inherited the house. (Figs. 9, 10).
- 57-59 (Plat 45, Lot 215) House (1926). An exceptionally large, 2½-story, jerkin-gable-roof, clapboard-and-banded shingle, three-family house with a deep porch across the front on the first two floors under an end-jerkin-gable roof with an inset loggia in the gable end.

(See Continuation Sheet #5).

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

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

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Continuation sheet 5

Item number 7 & 10

Page 6

This is a large example of a well-finished apartment house built for the middle-class rental market.

NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

600-602 Broad Street (Plat 45, Lot 6) Service Station (c. 1950). A 1-story, flat-roof, concrete-block-and-enamelled-metal-panel-clad service station building with double garage doors and a glassed-in office.

Item #10, cont.

boundary was drawn to include a concentration of visually and historically related late nineteenth-century dwellings, distinct from the vacant land and later construction that surrounds the group.

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 checked="" 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 1875-1920 **Builder/Architect** N.A.

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Wesleyan Avenue is significant for its high-quality Victorian architecture, and for its historic importance as a well preserved portion of the City's South Providence neighborhood. Wesleyan Avenue in South Providence was settled beginning in the 1870's. It was one of several short streets platted adjacent to Broad Street which at that time was one of the City's most fashionable addresses. While Broad Street displayed a succession of grand mansions (such as the Israel B. Mason house, 571 Broad Street, listed in the National Register), the newer streets attracted Providence's upper middle-class merchants and industrialists who prospered during the City's post-Civil War growth. The houses built along Wesleyan Avenue for these men and their families reflect the architectural diversity of the late nineteenth century, and together with Broad Street, formed a neighborhood which attracted residents from all parts of Providence.

Of particular note is the Stick Style dwelling with elaborate Modern Gothic porch built for Samuel B. Darling in 1885. Darling was probably the wealthiest resident of Wesleyan Avenue, and construction of his house coincided with his retirement as a partner in the firm of Brown & Sharpe, manufacturers of precision tools. Today the Darling house remains as one of Providence's finest Stick Style houses.

Wesleyan Avenue remained a fashionable address into the early twentieth century when the few remaining vacant lots were filled with handsome single-family houses such as the Augustine H. Downing House with its unusual Gothic porch. It was at this time that the few multi-family houses on the street also were built. These were fairly expensive structures intended to house middle-class tenants and they respected the area's established visual and social character.

By the 1950s, many of the larger houses had been divided into apartments. In the 1960s and 1970s, South Providence declined into a slum and the neighborhood suffered from extensive demolition and redevelopment. Wesleyan Avenue, however, has remained intact and today is the best preserved late nineteenth-century residential street in South Providence.



WESLEYAN AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Photographer: Leslie J. Vollmert

Date: July 1978

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

George H. Busiel House, 596 Broad Street

N^o 1



STOP

WESLEYAN AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Photographer: Leslie J. Vollmert

Date: March 1978

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

38-40 Taylor Street; Francis F. Leckie House,
44 Taylor Street

No 2



WESLEYAN AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Photographer: Leslie J. Vollmert

Date: March 1978

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

Eugene M. Sawin House, 15 Wesleyan Avenue

№ 3



WESLEYAN AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Photographer: Leslie J. Vollmert

Date: July 1978

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

Wesleyan Avenue, north side, view to the east
showing Augustine H. Downing House,
25 Wesleyan Avenue; Walter F. Slade
House, 21 Wesleyan Avenue; and
Eugene M. Sawin House, 15 Wesleyan
Avenue

Nº 4



WESLEYAN AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Photographer: Leslie J. Vollmert

Date: March 1978

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

Eva S. Dean House, 24 Wesleyan Avenue

No 5



WESLEYAN AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Photographer: Leslie J. Vollmert

Date: March 1978

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

Amasa C. Tourtellot House, 32 Wesleyan Avenue

N^o6



WESLEYAN AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Photographer: Leslie J. Vollmert

Date: March 1978

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

Herbert W. Greene House, 40-42 Wesleyan Avenue

N^o1



WESLEYAN AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Photographer: Leslie J. Vollmert

Date: March 1978

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

Phebe W. Gardiner House, 43 Wesleyan Avenue

Nº 8

Removed for Providence Book

Mack Woodward

27 December 1985

WESLEYAN AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Photographer: Leslie J. Vollmert

Date: March 1978

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

Wesleyan Avenue, north side, view to the east
with Samuel B. Darling House, 53
Wesleyan Avenue, in foreground

No 9



WESLEYAN AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

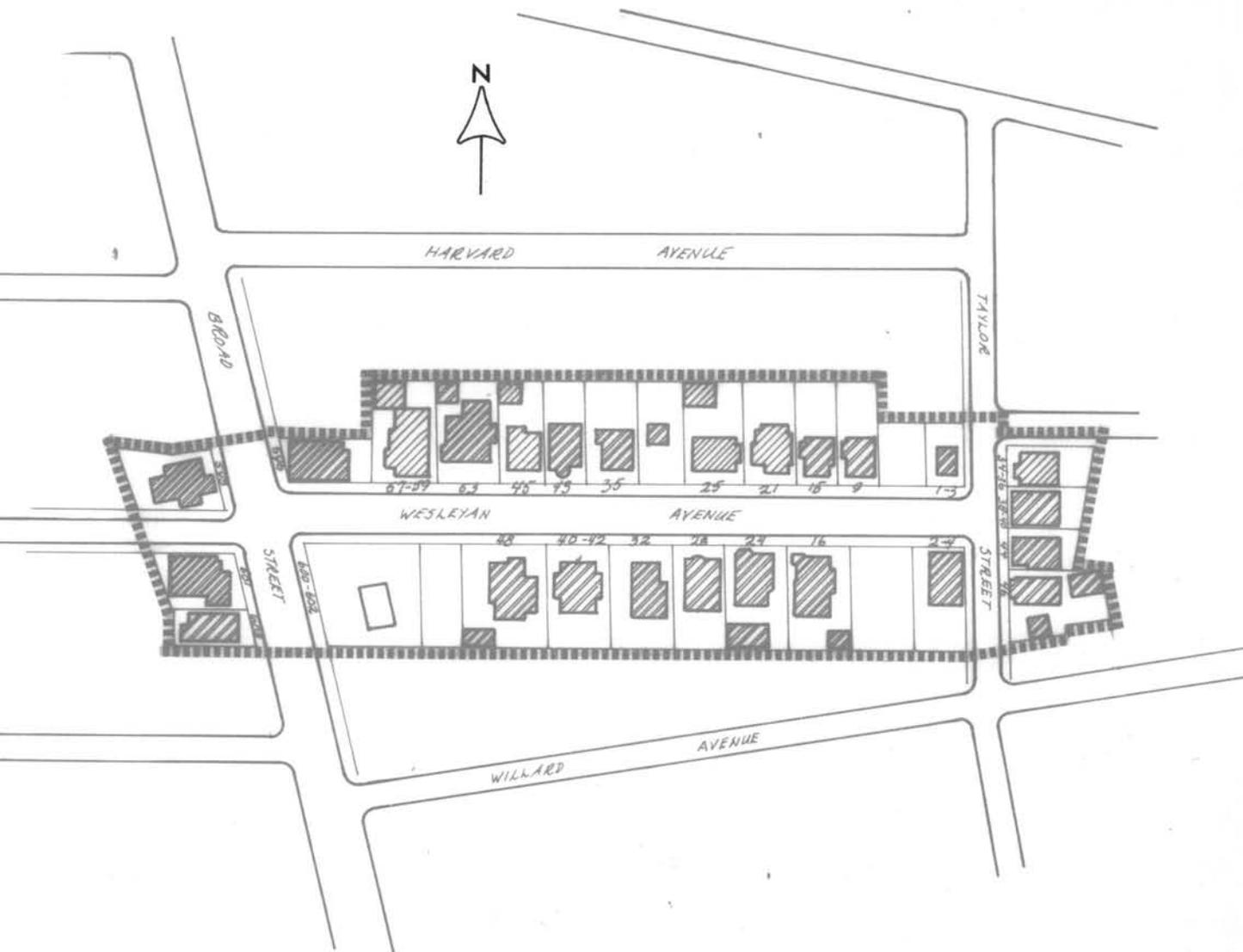
Photographer: Leslie J. Vollmert

Date: February 1978

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

Samuel B. Darling House, 53 Wesleyan Avenue

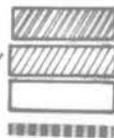
No 10



WESLEYAN AVENUE HISTORIC DISTRICT
 PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND
 NOT TO SCALE

KEY

LATE VICTORIAN
 EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY
 NON-CONTRIBUTING
 DISTRICT BOUNDARY



Wesleyan Avenue Historic District
 Providence, Rhode Island

UTM Co-ordinates:

A	19:299160:	4631080
B	19:299160:	4631010
C	19:298840:	4631000
D	19:298840:	4631110

