

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

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

For HCERS use only

received

date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic Waterman-Winsor Farm

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 79 Austin Avenue not for publication

city, town Smithfield (Greenville) vicinity of congressional district #1-Mon. Fernand St. Germain

state Rhode Island code 44 county Providence code 007

**3. Classification**

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

**4. Owner of Property**

name Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas W. Nerney

street & number 79 Austin Avenue

city, town Greenville vicinity of state Rhode Island 02828

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Smithfield Town Hall

street & number 64 Farnum Pike

city, town Esmond, Smithfield state Rhode Island 02917

**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

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

Waterman-Winsor Farm is a picturesque surprisingly intact group of house and outbuildings set, now, on less than two acres of land, but originally encompassing a much larger area. The house, built in two sections, c. 1710 and c. 1780, faces south and is screened by a row of seventeen large sugar maple trees planted along the road by William Winsor in 1863. Behind the house, in a semi-circular pattern (see site plan) are ranged a series of outbuildings, some of which or portions of which may date from the eighteenth century. From west to east, a long shed, carriage shed, and tack room lead to a large barn, and then to the stone foundation of a smaller barn. East of this foundation is the site of a former pond, bisected by a stone dam with a grassy track across it. Just west of the southern part of the pond, is an ice house foundation and west of this is a small mid-or late nineteenth-century frame cider mill with two attached sections: a wash house and an outhouse. The land beyond or east of the pond used to be kept in apple orchards, but this was sold in the twentieth century and has yielded to ranch house-type housing.

The Waterman-Winsor House is a large, clapboarded dwelling built in two sections. The earliest section, built perhaps about 1710, is two-and-a-half stories tall with a large off-center stone chimney, now reduced and faced in brick above the steeply-pitched gable roof. A simple Colonial Revival style porch, built sometime after 1911,<sup>1</sup> extends the full width of the asymmetrical four-bay facade, sheltering the front (south) entrance which is set in a simple Victorian frame with elongated sidelights. Two striking aspects of this section of the house are the steeply-pitched roof and the pronounced overhang of the garret at either gable end defined by a pronounced full return moulding; both characteristics suggest early construction techniques.

The later portion of the house, a two-story gambrel-roofed section with brick interior chimney, is said to have been moved to this location and now forms a broad rear ell. It adjoins the original section at a right angle, offset by one bay to the west. The ell, three bays long and two bays deep, appears to date from about 1780. Window frames in this section are framed into the cornice as they are on the front portion, although the cornice molding profiles vary considerably from one section to the other, the later cornice being much flatter and less complex. Sash in the rear ell are 6/6 and may well be original. Sash in the front section are generally larger mid-nineteenth-century frames. Two tall 9/9 windows remain in the garret ends.

The interior of the house has been somewhat altered through the years, but substantial sections of the original building fabric and plan remain. The earliest section appears to have followed a modified five-room center-chimney plan (see floor plan) with a narrow staircase in front of the

<sup>1</sup>A photograph taken c. 1911 shows no porch.

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## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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chimney (removed sometime late in the nineteenth century), two parlors with stone fireplaces flanking the chimney, and two or three rooms across the back, the central one also with a fireplace. Major changes in this section include the aforementioned removal of the front staircase; the consequent insertion of a "new" staircase in the northwest corner of the house, apparently re-using the original railing in a straight instead of a turned run (see photo); the removal of one or more partitions in the rear tier of rooms; and the insertion of late nineteenth- or early twentieth-century details: window frames and sash throughout, French doors between the southeast parlor and the room behind it, and a very plain mantel, also in the southeast parlor.

Despite these changes, the house's early origins are clearly evident. In almost every room on the first floor cased corner posts are visible; in the rear room the beaded casing is angled and awkwardly enlarged at the top, presumably to cover a gunstock. On the second floor several of these hewn and beveled gunstock posts are exposed.

There are at least six fireplaces in this section, three to a floor. The fireplace in the southwest parlor has been partially opened by the present owners, revealing a cavernous stone maw with a brick bake oven in the rear wall. A massive hewn oak lintel, approximately ten feet long, spans the fireplace. The fireplace in the eastern front room remains obscured by a heavy vernacular late Greek Revival mantel and wallpaper over its mouth. The fireplace in the rear central room has a very shallow brick firebox and a mid-eighteenth century mantel which features a small bolection moulding on the surround and two horizontal beveled panels beneath a complex cornice moulding, capped by a later shelf. To the right is a two-panel door leading to a cupboard.

On the second floor, the fireplace in the southwest chamber is covered over entirely, but that in the southeast chamber is still visible, with some difficulty, at the back of a shallow closet (see photo). This fireplace, like the rear downstairs one, is currently in mid-eighteenth century form: it has a shallow brick firebox and mid-eighteenth century full-height mantel with two broad vertical panels set in a flat field and capped by a moulded cornice. At some later time, a plank with a beaded edge was affixed at a right angle to this mantel left of the firebox and extends, awkwardly, about ten inches into the room. Beside this is a tall narrow cupboard,

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with a series of shelves, one with a curved cutout for a tophat, concealed behind a two-panel door. The shallow fireplace in the rear room has a firebox and no mantel, and appears, also, to be an early reworking of the original fireplace configuration.

Several other noteworthy features in this section of the house are the unusual beveled form of the gunstock haunches (which echoes the beveled form of the stair-rail); the use of an exterior turned Victorian porch post at the head of the present stairs; and the many two-and four-panel doors, found throughout the house. Some doors remain in what appear to be their original locations hung by their original strap hinges; others have been moved about and feature a variety of hardware: strap hinges, H-L hinges, iron latches, and brass knobs.

The rear section of the house is much simpler in layout and detail than the front portion. Essentially, it is, and appears always to have been, one large room with a fireplace on its north wall with two smaller rooms, presumably storage areas for this kitchen, behind the chimney stack. The smaller of these rooms is now used as a bathroom; the larger is used as a modern kitchen. The present chimney and fireplace with bake oven have been carefully reconstructed from evidence left when the originals were removed, under the supervision of restoration architect Lombard Pozzi. A 4-panel door, found in one of the outbuildings, exactly fits the small cupboard reconstructed above and to the left of the fireplace. Upstairs, the arrangement is similar with one broad chamber with fireplace and an open storage area behind entered by a door on either side of the fireplace. One of these doorways has a paneled door with glass panes set into the top half.

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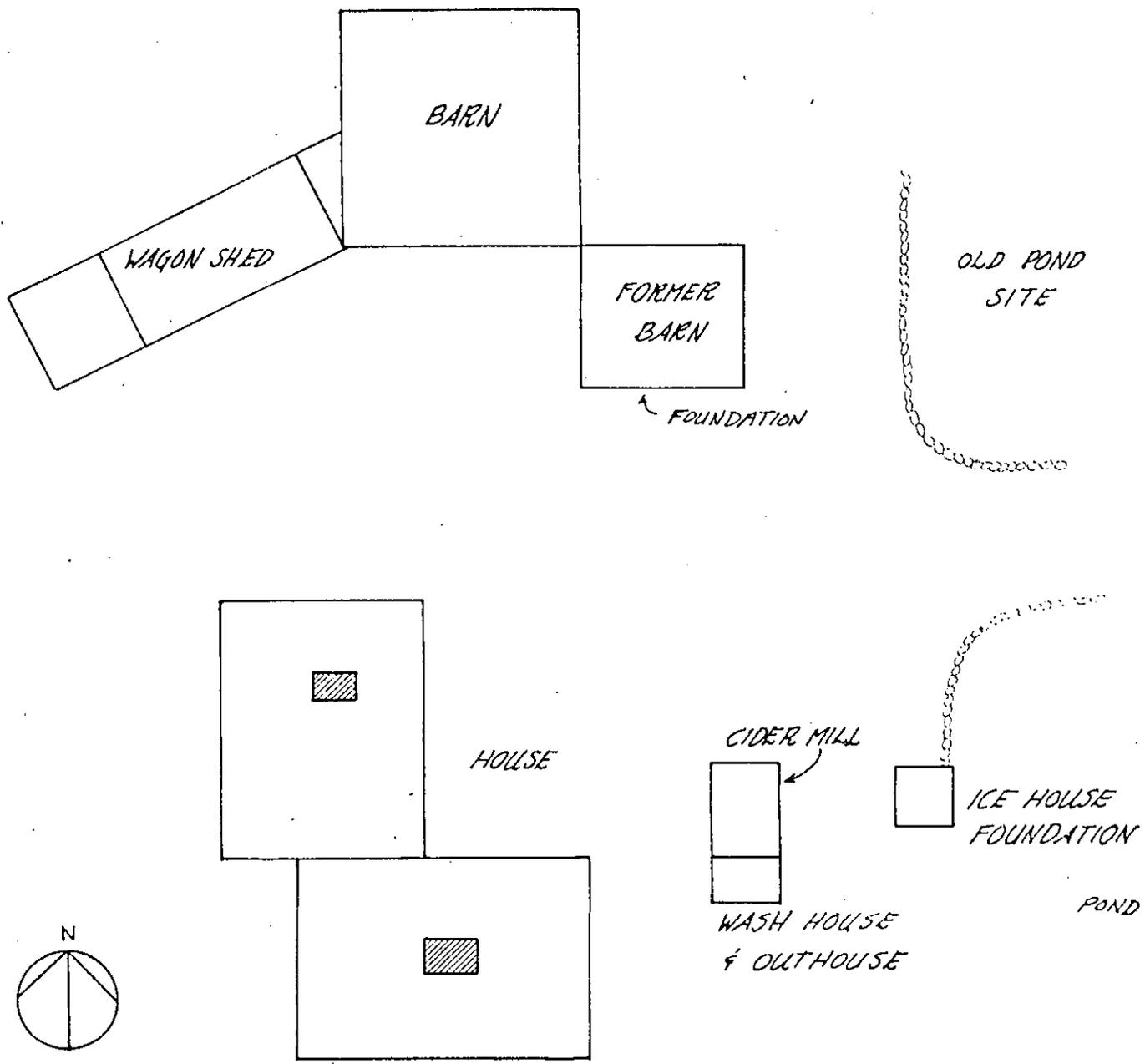
3

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WINSON FARM  
79 AUSTIN AVENUE  
SMITHFIELD (GUSENVILLE), RAGDE ISLAND  
(see continuation sheet #1)

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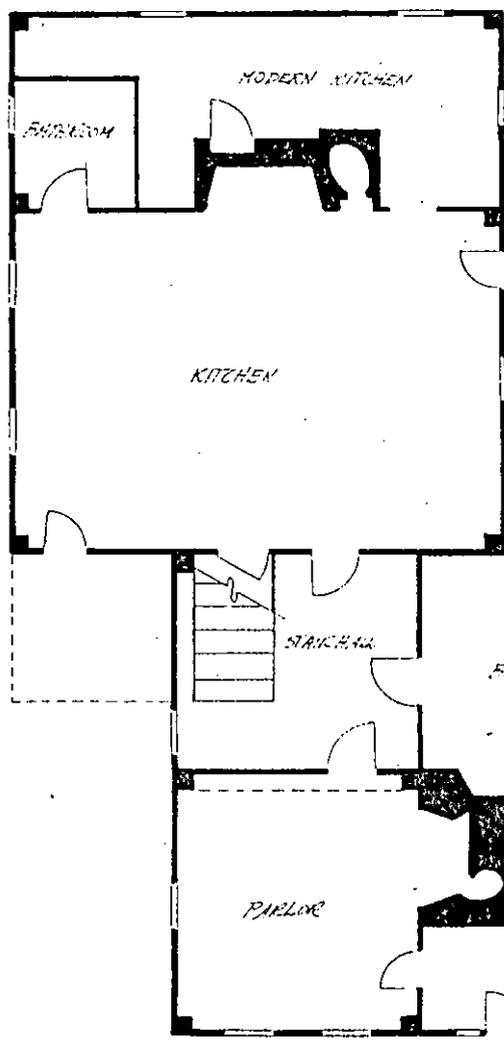
4

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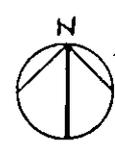
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WINSOR FARM  
79 AUSTIN AVENUE  
SMITHFIELD (GREENVILLE), RHODE ISLAND



FOOT MEASURING

## 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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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 c. 1710 & c. 1780 Builder/Architect

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Waterman-Winsor Farm is architecturally and agriculturally significant in a statewide context. The house - built perhaps as early as 1710 and added on to about 1780 - is valuable for the study of early Rhode Island house forms and their evolution through time. The almost intact complex of farm outbuildings graphically illustrates an agricultural existence which proved viable here from the early 1700s through the mid-1950s. The property's association with two early and prominent Smithfield families-- the Watermans and the Winsors--is also noteworthy in the context of local history. Smithfield was one of four towns set off from the original settlement at Providence in 1730, and members of both the Winsor and Waterman families were on the land in Greenville by that time.

### History of the Property

Deed research on the Waterman-Winsor Farm suggests that the house may have been built by or for Benjamin Wright sometime before 1735. A deed of sale of that year, from Benjamin Wright to Resolved Waterman, Sr., described a farm apparently in this location containing 75 acres of land and meadow on both sides of the "Country Road" with a dwelling house, orchard and fencing.<sup>1</sup> A 1756 reference<sup>2</sup> indicates that Resolved Waterman's homestead farm by then included 600 acres; a 1764<sup>3</sup> reference to the homestead farm of Resolved Waterman, deceased, mentions the same acreage with "a dwelling house, two smaller houses, one barn, one cribb, one grist mill, and one distill house thereon standing." (Resolved Waterman began a tavern in Greenville in 1733.) It appears that the northern portion of this acreage included the Waterman-Winsor Farm.

Resolved Waterman, Sr. willed a portion of his farm to his son Resolved, who in turn willed it to his son Andrew. Andrew Waterman, "yeoman, of Smithfield," sold the farm to his son William "merchant, of Providence" in 1776.<sup>4</sup> The farm at that point included two dwelling houses, a barn, a corn crib, and about ninety acres of land. Following William Waterman's death in 1791, the farm passed to his heirs, son Stephen Waterman, daughter Nancy Waterman, son-in-law Thomas Brown and his wife Mary (Waterman), and

<sup>1</sup>Smithfield Land Evidence, book 1, p. 264.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid, book 4, p. 48

<sup>3</sup>Ibid, book 5, p. 362

<sup>4</sup>Smithfield Land Evidence, book 6, p. 452.

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wife Sarah. In 1804<sup>5</sup> and 1806<sup>6</sup> they sold the 103-acre farm to Ziba Smith of Gloucester who was married to William Waterman's daughter Lydia. The heirs of Ziba Smith--Martin Smith, his wife Mary, and Phebe Smith--sold the farm to William W. Winsor in 1855.<sup>7</sup> He sold the farm to his brother James Winsor April 7, 1864, after enlisting in Battery A, Rhode Island Artillery, United States Service, presumably to fight in the Civil War. The farm passed to James' son Thomas King Winsor in 1903, from him to his son Stanley in 1949, and from Stanley to the present owners in 1975.

### Significance

Early and mid-eighteenth century deeds refer to orchards and fruit trees on the Waterman farm. In 1861, James Winsor began a commercial orchard here producing apples for the market and inaugurating a Winsor tradition which continued for almost a century.<sup>8</sup> His son Thomas K. Winsor, known as "T. K." Winsor, continued and developed the orchard business and became the largest orchardist in the state.<sup>9</sup> He had more than one hundred acres planted in orchards, grew over twenty varieties of apples (including the Redskins and Rhode Island greenings for which the orchard was particularly noted), and shipped his harvest not only throughout the United States but also to Europe. "T. K." was known in some circles as the "Apple King." "Maplewood Orchard," as it was called because of the row of seventeen sugar maples planted along the road in 1863 and still standing, was the heart of his kingdom. An old sign found in the barn by the present owners of the farm reads "Maplewood Orchard, Est. 1891."

Commercial orchards, and commercial perishable produce growing, began to develop in Rhode Island after the middle of the nineteenth century, when the major industrial areas (such as Pawtucket, Providence,

<sup>5</sup>Smithfield Land Evidence, book 11, p. ;178

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, book 11, p. 304

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, book 28, p. 517

<sup>8</sup>North County, September 27, 1979, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

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and Woonsocket) were becoming increasingly urbanized. No longer did each person grow all or even most of what he consumed, especially if he was a city dweller. With the development of the railroad, stable non-perishable food goods could be brought to the cities more inexpensively from the mid-west's rich agricultural areas than from the frequently stony hinterlands of Rhode Island. The hinterland farms began to specialize in more perishable crops--apples, eggs, poultry, etc.--and ones more suited to their hilly, frequently rocky or sandy land. These crops could be taken by wagon either directly into the city or to the nearest railroad freight depot. A large agricultural area centering in Greenville developed into Rhode Island's primary apple country between the 1880s and 1940s. James and "T. K." Winsor were among the earliest and most successful of the growers.

When "T. K." died in 1949, he left the farm and the apple business to his son Stanley T. Winsor, then of Barrington, Rhode Island, a residential suburb of Providence. T. K.'s will specified "all my books, papers, and other literature pertaining to the fruit business and industry...also my entire fruit and farming business including the good will, trade names and trade rights that I may have, and all the machinery, tools, autos...auto trucks, spraying outfits, wagons, horses, cows, harnesses, hay, grain, feed, and all articles of personal property that are used in or pertain to my fruit or farming business, for his own use forever..."<sup>10</sup>

Stanley Winsor did operate the orchards, but the hurricane of 1954 heavily damaged the trees and for that reason as well as other considerations, Maplewood Orchard ceased operations in 1956 after almost one hundred years of productivity. Gradually the orchards were sold off for ranch house developments, one of which is called after the orchards but retains not a single apple or other fruit tree. This kind of land-use change was typical in the 1950s not only in Rhode Island but in other New England states as well. When in 1975 Stanley Winsor and his wife (then of Fort Meyers, Florida) sold the Winsor Farm to its present owners, all that remained was 1.85 acres of land with the house and surrounding outbuildings.

Additional research on the Waterman-Winsor Farm might well yield valuable information on the apple industry in Rhode Island as well as on earlier farm practices and on the Waterman and Winsor families. But the farm complex, as it stands today, reduced in size but with

<sup>10</sup>Smithfield Probate Proceedings, v. 3, pp 509-512.

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buildings surprisingly intact, remains a fine physical witness to the history of Greenville and Smithfield from almost the earliest period of their settlement to the present.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Bayles, Richard M., History of Providence County, Rhode Island  
W. W. Preston & Co., New York, 1891, vol. 2, p. 200 et seq.

(See Continuation Sheet #8)

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 1.85 acres

Quadrangle name Georgiaville

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A 

1	9	2	8	7	3	7	0	4	6	3	9	6	5	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

plat 44, lot 22A on the northeast side of Austin Avenue, northwest of the village of Greenville

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

state	code	county	code

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Ancelin V. Lynch, National Register Coordinator

organization Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission date March 1980

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

city or town Providence state Rhode Island 02903

## 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 Thomas H. Williamson

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date May 14, 1980

For HCRS 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















Waterman-Winsor Farm  
Smithfield (Greenville), Rhode Island

Photographer: Warren Jagger February 1980  
Negative at: Rhode Island Historical  
Preservation Commission

View of re-used stair-rail in back staircase, looking  
west, showing bevel of rail and cut in rail and  
stringcourse.

Photo #4























Waterman-Winsor Farm  
Smithfield (Greenville), Rhode Island

Copy Negative made February 1980  
Negative at: Rhode Island Historical  
Preservation Commission

View of Winsor family and Winsor house c. 1911.  
T. K. Winsor is seated holding son Stanley. His wife,  
Fannie Ella (Sebille) Winsor is seated at right and  
daughter Martha is child in wicker rocker.

Photo #10



Waterman-Winsor Farm  
Smithfield (Greenville)  
Rhode Island

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