National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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1. Nan	ne	_		
historic Wes	sterly Downtown H	istoric Distric	t	-
	<u> </u>			
and/or common				
2. Loca				
street & number	High, Canal, Br and Railroad Ay		Main Streets,	not for publication
		N.A.vicinity of	cong. district	
city, town Wes	sterly	11.121 Vicinity of	-congressional district	Hon. Claudine Schneider
state Rhode	Island code	44 county	Washington	code 009
3. Clas	sification	•		
Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
_X. district building(s)	X public X private	X occupied X unoccupied	agriculture X commercial	museum
structure	X both	work in progress	educational	park _X private residence
site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	\underline{X} entertainment	religious
object	N.A.in processbeing considered	_X_ yes: restricted	X government	scientific
	being considered	yes: unrestricted _X_ no	industrial military	_X transportation other:
name List	on file at the RI	hode Island His	torical Preserva	tion Commission
city, town	•	vicinity of	state	
5. Loca	ation of Lega	l Description	on	
courthouse, regi	stry of deeds, etc. Weste	erly Town Hall		
street & number	Broad Street			,
city, town	Westerly		state	Rhode Island
6. Repi	resentation i	n Existina		
Statew	ide Survey of His	storic	<u> </u>	
itle Struct	ures - Town of We	esterly has this pro	perty been determined el	igible?yes _X no
1978	•		federal <u>X</u> sta	te county loca
iate 1970		n		
lepository for su	rvey records Rhode Is	sland Historical	Preservation C	
epository for su	rvey records Rhode Is	sland Historica	Preservation (

7. Description

Condition

X good

X_ fair

deteriorated _X_ excellent

unexposed

Check one

X unaitered X original site X altered

Check one X moved

date 18-22 Canal St. (1866): 88, 88½, 90½ High St. (early 20th century)

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Downtown Westerly district includes fifty-four structures and encompasses most of the commercial and civic core of the town of Westerly, the largest town in southern Rhode Island. The district is situated on the east bank of the Pawcatuck River, about six miles north of Longa Island It is primarily linear in configuration, extending parallel to the river along Main, High, and Canal Streets, and is basically characterized by two- and three-story, closely spaced masonry commercial structures; set directly along the edge of the sidewalk. An adjacent cluster of institutional buildings within the district on Broad Street sit on small lawns and are more widely spaced, as are the group of mid-nineteenth century residences at the northern end of the district along High Street.

The central focus of the district is the open space formed by the "T" intersection of Broad and High Streets, known as Dixon Square. It was named after the imposing Dixon House Hotel which faced the square from 1866 until it was destroyed by fire in 1928. Today the square is dominated by the five-story, Renaissance Revival, limestone headquarters of the Washington Trust Company, built at Broad and Main Streets in 1925. The northeast corner of the square is formed by the continuous row of two- and three-story, late Victorian and early twentieth-century commercial structures which run north on High Street and extend west on Broad Street to the Pawcatuck River bridge. The northwest corner of the square is formed by the curving, colonnaded marble facade of Westerly Post Office, built in 1913.

With its curved form, the Post Office serves as a visual (as well as functional) link between the row of commercial buildings along High Street and the cluster of civic structures just east of the square on This small civic center includes the yellow brick, Roman-Broad Street. esque Revival Westerly Memorial and Public Library, built in 1894, and the granite Westerly Town Hall and Court House, built in an Academic Revival style in 1912, as well as the 1872 red brick Victorian Old Town Hall just south of Broad Street on Union Street. There is a spaciousness to the district at this location provided by both the well-maintained lots on which these institutional structures sit, and by adjacent Wilcox Park, a late nineteenth-century park already listed on the National Register as part of the Wilcox Park Historic District. The district extends a short distance south from Broad Street along Main Street and includes another locally important civic institution, the well-preserved, mansard-roofed Victorian headquarters of the Utter Company, publishers of the Westerly newspaper since the 1850s.

North of Dixon Square the district extends parallel to the river for two blocks along High and Canal Streets to its termination at the railroad. This is the principal commercial zone of the town, and both sides of the street are lined with an almost unbroken row of two- and three-story commercial blocks and a continuous band of plate-glass store-

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fronts. Although visually cohesive in scale and materials, the district incorporates a variety of architectural styles from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries. Representative of these structures are the Brown Building, a two-story, red brick commercial block with ornate terra-cotta trim at 16-22 High Street; the Collins Building, a small, three-story cast-iron-front building at 67 High Street; and a two-story, yellow brick Art Deco Building built for the Montgomery Ward Company at 15-17 Canal Street.

The northern boundary of the district is marked by another architecturally distinguished and functionally important public building, the Westerly Railroad Station, built in the Spanish Colonial Revival style in 1912. There is a strong relationship between this building and the public institutions at the south end of the district not only in function (each is an important civic component of a central business district), but also in the classical elements of its architectural style, and in its building materials, which include a distinctive terra-cotta tile roof similar to the tile roofs of the Memorial and Public Library, the Washington Trust Company, and (before it was recently altered) the Westerly Post Office.

The district also includes a group of well-preserved, early and mid-nineteenth-century houses on the north side of High Street, northeast of that street's intersection with Canal Street. These include the substantial Italianate H.H. Langworthy House at 92 High Street, and a pair of similar Greek Revival houses, the James H. Porter House at 98 High Street and the Christopher Stillman House at 100 High Street. Wilcox Park forms the southern edge of High Street at this location. A right-of-way on the north side of the street leads to a small cluster of well-preserved houses moved in the 1920s to the interior of the block to make room for the construction of commercial structures on Canal Street. Of particular interest here are the elegantly detailed Greek Revival Lemuel Vose House, 88 High Street, and the mansard-roofed Stephen Wilcox House at 90½ High Street. Also part of this cluster, although still standing on its original site, is the distinguished, Second Empire mansion built about 1870 for Sanford Stillman, a prominent carriage manufacturer. Set with its tall, three-story tower on the steep hill behind Canal Street, the Stillman House (now the Alba Inn) is a very visible landmark which serves as a reminder of the earlier residential character at the north end of this district.

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INVENTORY OF CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

Contributing structures are defined as those structures which date from the primary period of growth and development of the Westerly Downtown District, from about 1840 to 1938, and which exhibit qualities characteristic of the overall historical and architectural fabric of the district. Structures which have lost most of their architectural integrity and those which are less than fifty years old are considered non-contributing, with the exception of the building at 25-37 Broad Street which is a particularly important element within the commercial street-scape of the district.

BROAD STREET

- 10-14 Wells Block (1882, rebuilt 1888): This three-story, brick business block with a corbelled brick cornice and simple granite lintels over the windows remains relatively unaltered with the exception of the remodelled storefronts. A one-story extension cantilevered over the Pawcatuck River on the west side of the structure dates from the nineteenth century.
 - Washington Trust Company (1925): York and Sawyer, a New York architectural firm also credited with the design of the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company building in Providence, were the designers of this five-story, limestone-faced Italian Renaissance-style structure. Extremely tall, round-headed windows in the two-story, rusticated base open into a double-height interior banking hall. Two-story pilasters above the base support a stone cornice and a fifth floor above that. The eaves of the terra-cotta tile roof deeply overhand the wall below. The bank was founded in 1880 and is believed to be the ninth oldest banking institution in the nation.
- Dixon Square Building (1938): Designed by Andrews, Jones, Biscoe, and Whitmore of Boston, this architecturally distinguished, Colonial Revival brick commercial block replaces the Dixon House Hotel which burned in 1938. The first floor is composed of a row of unaltered wood and plate-glass storefronts with a neat, unified band of signs. The second floor of the structure, which houses offices, gives the building the height and scale which help to make it an important element in the streetscape of the district at this prominent location facing Dixon Square.
- 41-43 James A. Welch Building (1911): A three-story, brick commercial block built in the Queen Anne style. A two-story oriel window

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Broad Street (cont.)

projects from the center of the facade, and wood traceries decorate the round headed windows on the third floor. Large brackets support a projecting cornice. The storefronts are modern, although it appears as if the originals may have been covered over. The Welch Building occupies the site of the old Phenix Bank.

Westerly Memorial and Public Library (1894, 1924): Designed by Longstaff and Hurd, an architectural firm from Bridgeport, Connecticut, this two-story, yellow brick structure with local granite and red sandstone trim was built in the Romanesque Revival style. With its distinctive hipped roof which is covered with red terra-cotta tiles, the library is an important visual landmark in the Westerly Downtown district. An addition to the east side, similar in style to the original building, was built in 1924. The structure is listed on the National Register as part of the Wilcox Park Historic District.

Westerly Town Hall and Courthouse (1912): Designed by William R. Walker and Son of Providence in the Academic Revival style, this two-story granite structure is capped with a slate hipped roof above a decorative copper cornice. Massive granite columns support a portico at the main entrance to the Town Hall on Broad Street. A much more modest side entrance on Union Street serves the Court House portion of the building at the rear. The structure is included within the Wilcox Park Historic District.

CANAL STREET

- 1-7 Nardone Block (1926): This large, three-story brick building which fronts both Canal and High Streets continues the tradition of earlier brick commercial buildings in downtown Westerly. First-floor shops face both streets. The corner of the structure, which is treated as a curve in the plan, serves as the visual focal point of the building. The two upper floors house apartments.
- 2-8 Murphy Building (1913): A simply detailed, three-story, primarily brick business block. Rectangular stone lintels are set above double-hung windows, and the facade is capped by a metal cornice. The original storefronts have been mostly covered over with stucco and an applied mansard roof. The Ninigret Hotel originally occupied the upper floors.
- 9-13 United Theater (early 20th century): Since the closing of the nine-teenth-century Bliven's Opera House in the Main Street neighborhood, just south of the Downtown District, this straightforward, two-story

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Canal Street (cont.)

brick theater has served as an entertainment center for the Westerly area. Two-story brick pilasters below a simple cornice articulate the facade into three bays; a projecting marquee at the central bay identifies the main entrance. The theater was designed for stage presentations as well as motion pictures.

- 10-16 Crandall Block (1917): Only a corbelled brick cornice and granite lintels above the double-hung windows on the upper floor decorate this two-story, brick commercial block. Although the continuous row of storefronts on the first floor have been remodelled, the framework of the original fronts may still remain intact under a later covering.
- 15-17 Commercial Block (early 20th century): Although this two-story, yellow brick structure conforms to the scale of earlier commercial buildings in the district, it reflects the architectural style of the 1920s with its rounded windows on the second floor and its glazed terra-cotta decorations. It was apparently built for the Montgomery Ward Company and followed a standard design being used by that nation-wide retail firm. An almost identical structure still stands in downtown New London, Connecticut.
- 18-22 former Rhode's Hotel? (early 19th century): This two-story, gable-roofed, frame structure, now covered over with vinyl siding, has been extensively remodelled over time. It is believed to be one of the two structures moved from Broad Street to make room for the construction of the Dixon House Hotel in 1866, quite possibly Rhode's Hotel, the first home of the Washington Bank.
- 19-21 Toscano Building (1923): This small, two-story buisness block is constructed of brickwork laid in a decorative basketweave pattern, and its flat roofline is embellished with a substantial stone cornice. It houses shops on the first floor and offices on the floor above.
 - (rear), House (before 1850): This one-and-one-half-story wooden cottage with a cross-gable roof was built in the Gothic Revival style, probably in the second quarter of the nineteenth century. A trim board carved with a swag motif separates the clapboarded first floor from the vertically boarded floor above. Sawn bargeboards decorate the gable ends. Although once part of a row of residential structures along this block of Canal Street, it has been isolated by later commercial structures built in front.

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Canal Street (cont.)

- 25-27 Morrone and Castagna Building (1927): The facade of this two-story, brick commercial block is Venetian/Romanesque in style. Pairs of round-headed windows on the second floor are separated with colonnettes, and they are set within larger round-headed brick recesses. The first floor storefronts have been remodelled to accommodate a restaurant. This structure was built in what was once the front yard of the Sanford Stillman Mansion.
 - Sanford Stillman House, now the Alba Inn (c. 1870): Set on the hill above the commercial district, this two-and-one-half-story, Second Empire mansion was the home of Sanford Stillman, a prominent carriage manufacturer. With its three-and-one-half-story square tower, open front porch, decorative wood cornice, and mansard roof with an unusual reverse curve form, the architectural integrity of this distinguished house has been well preserved. Stillman fabricated his carriages on the property in a three-story shed which no longer survives.
- Martin House Hotel (c. 1888): A large, rectangular, brick structure, three-and-one-half-stories in height, capped with a slate mansard roof. The central bay of the facade is carried a story higher to give it a tower-like appearance. The original cast-iron-and-wood storefronts have been somewhat altered but remain relatively intact. It was built by Michael Martin, who operated the Steamboat Hotel in Stonington, but in its early years it was leased out and known as the "Foster House."

HIGH STREET

Westerly Post Office (1913-14): This imposing, marble-faced public building was built from the designs of James Knox Taylor. Its main facade, which fronts Dixon Square and follows the gentle curve of High Street, provides a visual transition between the cluster of civic buildings on Broad Street to the east and the commercial structures on High Street to the north. A row of Doric columns on this facade supports an ornamental terra-cotta cornice and forms a shallow portico. The original tile roof of the building has been replaced in recent years with a metal roof. The building is individually listed on the National Register.

2 Marini Building (1888): This flat-roofed, three-story brick commercial building was built as an extension of the adjacent Wells Block on Broad Street following a fire which destroyed a previous

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High Street (cont.)

commercial building on the site in 1888. The top of the structure is treated with a corbelled brick cornice, and the stone window lintels on the upper floors are set into courses of decorative brickwork.

- 4-10 Stillman Block (1888): A three-story, brick, commercial block, designed and built by the locally prominent Maxson and Company to replace a previous structure on the site destroyed in 1888 fire. Large, two-story recesses in the brickwork frame pairs of windows on the second and third floors. The facade is now missing its distinctive parapet which was treated with a large central pediment with smaller pediments to either side. The storefronts on the street level have been remodelled. The structure originally housed O. Stillman's book store and stationery shop, and the third floor was used as a meeting hall.
 - former Industrial Trust Company (1916): Along with the marble-faced Westerly Post Office immediately across High Street, this Beaux-Arts granite building is among the most ornate structures in downtown Westerly. The front of the two-and-one-half-story building is treated with a pediment and entablature supported by pairs of Ionic columns at either side of the main entrance. The entrance provides access to a two-story banking hall beneath a rooftop dome. The exterior of the building remains well preserved although the structure is now vacant. It was built to serve as a branch office of the Providence-based Industrial Trust Company following that firm's takeover of the National Niantic Bank, whose earlier headquarters had occupied this site since before 1850.
- 16-26 Brown Building (1896; rebuilt 1903 following a fire): This twostory brick structure is one of the best preserved of the late-Victorian business blocks in the district. Built by Randolf, Bently, and Company, the structure houses five wide storefronts on the first floor andoffices on the floor above. What was intended to be the central bay of the facade contains a wide, deeply recessed entry, identified by a group of three round-headed windows on the floor above and above that by elaborate decorative terracotta panels in the parapet. Because the structure was never constructed to its full length, this entrance appears to be off Although much of the original cast-iron storefront construction is missing, it has been very sensitively rebuilt recently as part of an overall rehabilitation of the structure. The building was named for its original owner, Hannah Brown, daughter of Westerly merchant O.D. Wells.

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High Street (cont.)

- former Westerly Furniture Company (1907): As this stretch of High Street was developing as a commercial district around the turn of the century, this large three-story brick block was built on what had been the lawn of the Wells estate. It was built in the tradition of earlier Victorian commercial structures, although it was more simply detailed. It remains relatively well preserved today, with the exception of its large cast-iron and plate glass storefronts which have been altered. This structure is included in the Wilcox Park Historic District.
- 42-46 Commercial Block (mid-19th century): This two-story commercial building originally extended a number of bays south, but these have been removed and their site is now vacant. The front of this structure is of frame construction and is now covered with vinyl siding. Tall double-hung windows on the second floor are trimmed with projecting wood lintels supported on small brackets. It is one of few remaining wood frame Victorian commercial structures which were once typical of this neighborhood.
- 43-51 South County Gas Company Building (c. 1920s): Interestingly enough, this granite-faced Colonial Revival commercial structure is one of few buildings in the downtown district which makes extensive use of Westerly's famous native stone. Although the ground floor is treated with storefronts, the slate-covered gable roof and the multi-light, double-hung windows on the second floor give the building a domestic character. A central entrance on the ground floor, which serces the office floor above, is treated with an overscaled frame and broken scroll pediment carved from marble. The building is included within the Wilcox Park Historic District.
- 48-52 Porter and Loveland Block (1893): This brick commercial structure was built to replace an earlier frame business block which was destroyed by fire in 1889. Originally a full three stories in height with a tall, corbelled brick cornice above that, its top was sliced off and the building was reduced to two stories in the twentieth century. The stone trim at the windows on the second floor provides the only hint of the original embellishment of the facade.
- 53-55 South County Public Service Company (1926): Also Colonial Revival in style, this structure was designed by Jackson, Robertson and Adams. Although the granite-faced ground floor of this primarily brick, three-story structure was designed for commercial use, it has been treated with individual round-headed windows rather than storefronts. At the roofline the central portion of the facade is

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High Street (cont.)

emphasized with a tall pediment projecting above the stone-trimmed brick parapet. It is included within the Wilcox Park Historic District.

- 54-62 Barber Memorial Building (1894): Like the Porter and Loveland Block next door, this structure also had its top floor removed. The wooden window bays once continued for another story in height and the projecting brick pilasters between pairs of narrow windows on the second floor once supported an elaborate cornice.
- Windsor House Hotel (1877): A long, three-and-one-half-story, mansard roof hotel with a continuous row of storefronts on the ground floor. Although the original clapboard covering and wood trim remains visible on the rear side, the street facade has been covered with artificial stone siding. The storefronts have been remodelled in the Art Deco style with decorative opaque glass panels and polished chrome. In its earliest years the hotel was called the Smith and Phillips House after the two ladies who ran it. The building is included in the Wilcox Park Historic District.
 - Collins Building (before 1850? Cast iron front c. 1880): This small, three-story commercial block is unique as the only full-cast iron front building in downtown Westerly. Its facade is composed of a metal and plate-glass shop front on the first floor, with pairs of single-story cast-iron colonnettes set between double-hung windows on the office floors above. The third floor is surmounted by a tall, projecting cast iron cornice. The front was fabricated in St. Louis, Missouri, by Mesker Brothers, Front Builders, a company established in 1879, but the frame structure behind may date from earlier in the century. The building is included in the Wilcox Park Historic District.
 - House and Office (before 1850): Originally this structure was a Greek Revival style residence, square in plan and three stories in height with a monitor, set back from the street with a small front lawn. By the turn of the century, the two-story addition abutting the sidewalk in front was build to accommodate a shop and office. A though some of the Greek Revival trim of the original structure remains visible, the body of the house has been covered with artificial siding. The shopfront in the front addition has been deeply recessed and remodelled in recent years. The structure is included in the Wilcox Park Historic District.
 - Samuel Coy House (before 1850): A three-story, primarily clapboard, gable-roofed structure built as a residence in the Greek Revival style. About the turn of the century the building was converted into apartments. The roof appears to have been raised and a third floor, covered with wood shingles, was inserted. The house retains detailing from both periods of construction, although the ground floor has received some inappropriate modern alterations. The house was once the home of Samuel Coy who was appointed as the first station master in Westerly when the railway came through in 1837. It is included in the Wilcox Park Historic District.

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High Street (cont.)

- Now located on a cul-de-sac behind the old Sanford Stillman House, this elegant, well-preserved Greek Revival house was the home of Lemuel Vose, a prominent grocer. Two stories in height with a gable roof, the house exhibits relatively elaborate classical detailing at the central entrance in its five-bay facade and its gable ends. In 1926 the house was moved up the hill from its original site at the corner of High and Canal Streets to allow room for the construction of the Nardone Block.
- 88 Residence (c. 1875, moved to this site in the 1920s): This two-and-one-half-story, clapboard residence with a flaring mansard roof covered with fish-scale wood shingles originally stood on Canal Street, immediately north of the Vose House. It also was moved up the hill to allow for the construction of commercial structures in the 1920s.
- 90 Welcome Hoxie House, now the Capalbo Building (before 1850):
 Although this two-story, clapboard structure was built as a residence before 1850, the Palladian window and elliptical fanlight in the gable-roof ell fronting the street probably date from the Colonial Revival period. This house, which remains on its original High Street site, has been converted into office use.
- 90½ Stephen Wilcox House? (before 1850): This two-story, gable-roofed, frame residence, now covered with artificial siding, was probably Stephen Wilcox's house which originally stood on High Street between the Lemuel Vose and Welcome Hoxie houses. It was moved to this lot behind High Street to allow room for the construction of a new structure in the 1920s. The turret on the south side of the house is a late nineteenth century addition.
 - 92 N.H. Langworthy House (c. 1870): A commodious, two-and-one-half-story, Italianate house covered by a mansard roof set on a deep, bracketed cornice. Projecting lintels trim its tall, double-hung windows. Except for the enclosure of a one-story front porch, the original architectural character of this clapboard house remains very much intact.
 - James H. Porter House (c. 1845): Built with the gable end of its roof facing the street, this two-story frame house retains much of its original Greek Revival character. The cornice, treated as a deep entablature on the front and sides, rests on cornerboards panelled to resemble pilasters. The simple bracketed porch on the

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High Street (cont.)

front and the addition with its bay window on the west side are late nineteenth-century alterations. Although now covered with shingles, the original siding was probably clapboard. Porter was a prominent manufacturer and merchant of tinware.

100 Christopher C. Stillman House (c. 1845): This two-story, Greek Revival clapboard house with the end of its gable roof facing the street is similar in style to the adjacent Porter House, although it appears to have seen fewer alterations over time. The three-bay wide house retains its original six-over-six windows and front entrance with sidelights and transom. The open, one-story front porch probably dates from the early twentieth century.

MAIN STREET

- 46-48 Commercial Block (early 20th century): The history of this onestory, frame commercial structure is unclear. It was either built after 1911, or remodelled from an earlier building. The front is composed of two identical plate-glass storefronts, each with a central recessed entry, set below a broad fascia which serves as a sign board.
- 56-64 Westerly Sun/Utter Company Building (1874): This two-and-one-halfstory brick building with a mansard roof is composed of a row of storefronts below a continuous cornice on the first floor with regularly spaced, round-headed windows on the floor above. Except
 - for some minor alterations to the storefronts, and two later additions, one at the rear (of red brick), the other on the north side (where large windows open on the printing plant), the structure appears much as it did when first built by George B. Utter to house his publishing business. The building is still the home of the Utter Company, publishers of the Westerly Sun newspaper.

RAILROAD AVENUE

Westerly Railroad Station (1912): This elegant, Spanish Colonial Revival structure, with its stucco walls and hipped, terra-cotta tile roof, was built to replace a frame depot which had been built about the time the railway first came through Westerly in 1837. It is composed of a central block housing the main waiting room, and two lower side wings housing baggage and service spaces. A central front entrance is protected by an open arcade surmounted by an

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Railroad Avenue (cont.)

ornamental terra-cotta dormer, designed to contain a clock, which breaks up through the overhanging eaves of the main roof. An open, hipped roof structure on the platform just west of the station serves as a waiting shelter, and a similar but enclosed structure just to the east provides access to a pedestrian subway below the tracks. At the time the station was built the tracks were moved north of their original location in order to build an automobile underpass at Canal Street.

- 3-7 Chester Building (1887): This two-story, brick commercial block was undoubtedly built to serve those using the railway depot across the street. Its simple form is typical of commercial structures of the period in Westerly with a continuous row of storefronts on ground level, and a corbelled brick cornice trimming its flat roof line. Trapezoidal in plan to fit its lot, the structure is built into the side of a hill with its second floor at grade level in the rear.
- 11-15 Chester Building Annex (1928): Although built forty years after the adjacent Chester Building, this two-story annex continued the simple style of the earlier structure.

JNION STREET

Old Town Hall (1872-74): Although this rectangular brick structure was designed and built by a prominent local builder, Charles Maxson and Company, the tall clock tower at the center of end facade was designed by Alfred Stone, a Providence architect, and constructed a year after the main building was complete. The hipped-roof building is quite severe in style with the limestone sills, keystones, and skewbacks of the segmental windows providing virtually the only decorative detail. The building served as town hall for Westerly until the present town hall was built across the street in 1912, and it subsequently housed an industrial school and various town offices. It is listed on the National Register as part of the Wilcox Park Historic District.

*7 Westerly Fire Station - per amendment (back of nomination)
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INVENTORY OF NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES

CANAL STREET

- 26-32 Commercial Block (1936): This one-story, flat-roofed, brick commercial structure houses four shops. It is attached to the south side of the old Martin House Hotel and it replaces an earlier commercial structure which formerly occupied the site.
- 19-23 former W.T. Grant Building, now McCrory's (1949): With the horizontal striations in the bonding pattern of its yellow brick walls, and the glass block windows on its upper floor, this two-story structure is reminiscent of Art Deco in style. The first floor is treated with a continuous plate-glass storefront. It is built on the site of "The Knoll," the former residence of O.D. Wells and his daughter, Hannah Brown.
- 25-35 Commercial Block (late 1930s): One story in height, this flatroofed brick structure houses four shops.
- 28-30 Commercial Block (after 1939): A one-story, double-storefront brick structure. It is simply trimmed above its storefronts with cast or carved stone reminiscent of Art Deco in style.
- 32-36 Commercial Block (late 1930s): The southern half of this onestory, brick commercial structure remains relatively unaltered while the northern half has been extensively remodelled and entirely covered over with a new facing material.
- 82-86 Commercial Block (c. 1950): A simple, one-story brick structure with four shops attached to the Nardone Block
 - Apartments (mid-20th century): Probably build on the site of a barn or shed behind the Langworthy House on High Street, this is a simple, two-story, gable-roofed apartment house.

MAIN STREET

38-44 New England Telephone Building (mid-20th century): A utilitarian, two-story, flat-roofed brick building with side loading dock, set back from Main Street with an asphalt parking lot in front.

RAILROAD AVENUE

17-19 Westerly Printing Company (mid-20th century?): A one-story, flatroofed brick commercial structure with bow-front show windows on either side of a large, Colonial Revival entrance.

8. Significance

prehistoric arche	ecture education engineering nerce exploration	ty planning landscape archion law s literature military ng music	nitecture religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater X_ transportation Other (specify) Urban_develope
Specific dates Variou	Builder/Arch	itect	ment

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Westerly Downtown Historic District has played an historically significant role as the commercial and governmental center for the largest community in southern Rhode Island from the early nineteenth century through the present day. The development of the district reflects significant regional development in industry and transportation and its subsequent growth in population and prosperity. This district is one of relatively few, and one of the most intact, small town "downtowns" in Rhode Island, characterized as a relatively compact, self-sufficient village core, urban in character, which incorporates commercial, civic, institutional, and transportation facilities servicing a larger region. South of Providence, similar small urban districts in Rhode Island can perhaps only be found at East Greenwich and in the Arctic settlement of West Warwick. The Westerly Downtown District is also architecturally significant for its visually cohesive, linear grouping of late-nineteenth and earlytwentieth century commercial structures which is punctuated at both its north and south ends by distinguished monumental public buildings from the same period.

The village center of Westerly developed largely as a result of its strategic location on the Post Road, the major land route along the New England coast, at the head of navigation of the Pawcatuck River, just six miles from the deep water of Long Island Sound. In addition, falls in the river at this spot (no longer evident) offered a potential source of water power. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the village, formerly known as Pawcatuck Bridge, had grown to include fifteen residences, a gristmill, and a bank. In 1814, the Pawcatuck Manufacturing Company built a stone mill just south of the Pawcatuck River bridge and introduced water-powered textile industry to the region. This was soon followed by the establishment of mills upriver at Stillmanville and White Rock, and nearby at Potter Hill and Bradford. During the first half of the nineteenth century, Westerly also developed as an important regional center for shipping, shipbuilding, and, to a limited extent, whaling. In 1832, the construction of the Stonington and Providence Railroad along at the northern edge of the village introduced a new form of transportation to Westerly which eventually supplanted the local shipping industry.

A quarry was put into operation near Bradford in 1834, establishing the local granite industry which was to bring Westerly into national prominence in the decades following the Civil War. Eventually at least

(See Continuation Sheet #13)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Best, Mary Agnes, The Town That Saved A State. Westerly: The Utter Company, 1943.

(See Continuation Sheet #17)

10. Geog	raphical Da	ta	
Acreage of nominated Quadrangle name As	property Approx. shaway, Connecti	24.7 acres cutR.I.	Quadrangle scale 1:24,000
A 1 19 26135	14 10 4 15 8 14 7 14 Northing	B 1 9 Zone	26,34,4,0 4,58,42,8,0
c 1,9 26,3 1 E	12 10 4 15 8 14 2 18	0 D 1 9	2 6,3 2,0,0 4,5 8,4 7,2,0
Verbal boundary de The district Rhode Island:	escription and justification includes the foundation Plat 56, lots	11 owing propert 1, 2, 3, 5, 6,	ties in the town of Westerly, 7, 8, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, cont. sheet #18)
List all states and	counties for properties	overlapping state or	county boundaries
state	code	county	code
state	code	county	code
11. Form	Prepared E	Ву	<u> </u>
name/title Cliff	ord M. Renshaw,	A.I.A.	
organization	·		date 8 May 1984
street & number 25	Main Street	,	telephone 401-294-6538
city or town Wick	ford		state Rhode Island
12. State	Historic P	reservation	Officer Certification
The evaluated signific	cance of this property with	in the state is:	
	ational state	X_ local	
665), I hereby nominal according to the criter	te this property for inclus ria and procedures set for	ion in the National Regist	storic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89– ter and certify that it has been evaluated Service.
State Historic Preserv	vation Officer signature	herder & Coll	Jill C. MSC-
thle State Hist	toric Preservati	on Officer	date 7 June 1984
For NPS use only	that this property is inclu	ded in the National Regist	er date ************************************
Keeper of the Nat	ional Register		date

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five large quarries were in operation, and Westerly granite was being shipped throughout the country. In 1855 Calvert Cottrell and Nathan Babcock started a machine shop in the village, subsequently relocated just across the river to Pawcatuck, Connecticut, which also became nationally prominent as a pioneer in the development of the modern printing press. During this same period of industrial development, the nearby seaside settlement at Watch Hill and adjacent coastal communities several miles south of the Westerly village were developing as socially prominent resorts and attracting summer visitors to the area in increasing numbers. From the beginning and through today, the village has provided the commercial goods and community services required by the seasonal residents.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, development of the Westerly village was concentrated on Broad Street and along Main Street south of the bridge across the Pawcatuck, clustering around the mills and wharves built along the river's edge. From the beginning, the section of Broad Street just east of the bridge, later known as Dixon Square, has served as the town center. As early as 1800 the Washington Bank, the town's first bank, was established here in a room of Rhode's Hotel, the village inn. None of the structures from this early period remains today, with the exception of Rhode's Hotel which may be the much altered structure now standing two blocks north of the square at 18-22 Canal Street.

Because of the relatively shallow drop in elevation of the Pawcatuck River at this spot, sufficient power to operate the new textile manufacturing equipment at the expanding mill on Main Street could not be obtained. To rectify this problem, the millowners built a long trench in 1827 from higher waters above the Stillmanville dam, a mile or so north of the village. This canal, which was actually an elongated headrace, ran parallel to the river along its east bank, sandwiched between it and High and Canal Streets on the east, to a spot just north of the bridge where it was tunnelled below the bridge and directed into the mill complex.

During this period, residential neighborhoods were established on north side of Broad Street and along High Street north of Broad. In the 1840s, the mansions of local millowners Jesse Moss and Rowse Babcock were built on large lots on the north side of Broad Street, adjacent to the High Street estate of O.D. Wells, a prominent merchant. Residential development at the northern end of High Street began in 1843 when Jonathan and Amos Stillman bought five acres of land and subdivided it into residential plots. Although the houses of the Stillman brothers no longer survive, still standing in this neighborhood are the Greek Revival houses of Christopher Stillman, 100 High Street, and of local

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tinware merchant James Porter, 98 High Street.

By the late 1860s, the village of Westerly had grown to include over 5000 inhabitants with four or five churches, four banks, and a variety of business concerns. Main Street remained the center of commercial and industrial activity. Moss and Babcock, partners who bought the local mill in 1838 and subsequently bought and developed other textile mills along the Pawcatuck, greatly enlarged the old Main Street mill with the construction of a large brick structure in 1869. In 1867 Moss and Babcock also built a five-story brick hotel on Broad Street, named the Dixon House, which was claimed to be one of the most elegant hotels in southern New England, second only to the Narragansett House in Providence. Although most of the early structures from this neighborhood have been lost, the two-and-one-half-story, mansard roof brick headquarters of the Utter Company publishing concern, built in 1874, is still standing at 56-64 Main Street and is included within the Westerly Downtown District.

It was during the prosperous years following the Civil War that intensive commercial development began at the northern end of the Westerly Downtown District on Canal Street and along the west side of High Street. The mansard roof, two-and-one-half-story Winsor House Hotel, built in 1877 (57-65 High Street) and the cast-iron-front Collins Building (67 High Street) remain from this early period of development. In 1867, the canal, which occupied most of the land on the west side of High Street, was abandoned when Moss and Babcock introduced steam power at the mill to operate their textile machinery. Largely because the canal's extensive street frontage and convenient location near the rail-road, then becoming the most important form of transportation in Westerly, the canal site was soon built-up with a continuous row of two- and three-story commercial structures.

Although the commercial structures first built along these streets were primarily wood frame, most of them were soon destroyed by fire and replaced with more ornate (and more permanent) masonry structures, most of which still stand. With its ornamental terra-cotta trim, the two-story, red brick Brown Building (1896, 16-26 High Street) is one of the most handsome structures in the district remaining from this period, as is the exceptional Beaux-Arts marble bank built for the Industrial Trust Company (1916, 14 High Street). Where fires have occurred in more recent decades, earlier structures have generally been replaced with one-story brick buildings which continue the line of shopfronts along the street, and the overall character of this late-nineteenth century commercial neighborhood remains very much intact today.

Throughout the late nineteenth century and to the present day,

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Broad Street and Dixon Square remained at the center of village life, and this location was chosen for the construction of the town's most important governmental and institutional structures. The Old Town Hall, Westerly's first municipal building, still standing on Union Street and included within the district, was built just south of Broad Street in 1872-74 on the site of an earlier meeting house. When the site of Jesse Moss' mansion on Broad Street came up for sale in the late nineteenth century, it was purchased by local industrialist Stephen Wilcox, inventor of the water tube boiler, and donated to the town for the construction of a With additional contributions from the local citizens, the architecturally significant, Romanesque Revival Memorial and Public Library, designed by Longstaff and Hurd, was built here in 1894. 1898 the neighboring estate of Rowse Babcock also became available. was purchased and established as a landscaped park by Helen Hoxie Wilcox, a local philanthropist. Although not included within the boundaries of this district, but already listed on the National Register as part of the Wilcox Park Historic District, Wilcox Park provides a beautiful backdrop for this local civic center.

The ambitious, late nineteenth-century movement for civic improvement in the village was followed in 1912 with the construction of an imposing new granite Town Hall and Court House, directly across Broad Street from the library, and in 1913 with the erection of an elegant new marble Post Office, just north of the library on part of the High Street estate of O.D. Wells. The Town Hall, designed by William R. Walker and Son of Providence, and the Post Office, built following the designs of James Knox Taylor, are both well preserved today and of exceptional architectural significance. Also of architectural significance is another important public structure, the ornately detailed, Spanish Colonial Revival Westerly Railroad Station (1912, Railroad Avenue), built at the same time at the northern end of the Westerly Downtown District.

Although the village of Westerly prospered and continued to develop along Broad, High, and Canal Streets through the early twentieth century, the old mills and business blocks along Main Street were gradually abandoned and eventually demolished. In 1925, the Washington Trust Company, successor to the Washington Bank, built its new five-story, Renaissance Revival limestone headquarters on Broad Street at Main Street on the site of one of the largest of these early commercial structures. With the destruction by fire of the Dixon House Hotel next door in 1928, this building became the most dominant structure in the district and it remains so today.

Through the 1920s, expansion of the commercial district continued at the upper reaches of High and Canal Streets where it intruded upon the

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earlier residential neighborhood. The pattern established earlier of of masonry commercial blocks built abutting one another continued here with structures erected in a variety of decorative styles. One of the most interesting commercial structures here is the Art Deco block built for the Montgomery Ward Company at 15-17 Canal Street. Fortunately, a number of the most significant residential structures which formerly stood on this land were moved to rear lots where they now form a handsome cluster on a right-of-way off High Street at the interior of the The most notable structure here may be the exceptionally handsome, richly detailed, well-preserved Greek Revival house (88 High Street) built for Lemuel Vose, a successful Westerly grocer. The row of commercial structures along High and Canal Street was completed in 1949 with the construction of the two-story, brick W.T. Grant Building, now McCrory's, at 19-29 High Street. It was built on the site of the old Wells mansion which had been used as a clubhouse since the turn of the century and remained standing through World War II.

In addition to retaining a cohesive architectural fabric of historical significance, the Westerly Downtown Historic District also remains the home of a number of businesses which have played important roles in the development of southwestern Rhode Island. Perhaps the most distinguished of these local institutions are the Washington Trust Company, headquartered at Broad and Main, and the Utter Company, the publishing firm at 56-64 Main Street. Established in 1800, the Washington Trust Company was the first bank established in rural Rhode Island, and today it is the ninth oldest banking institution in the United States. The bank's first headquarters, a small Greek Revival temple possibly designed by Russell Warren, is believed to have been the first building ever constructed of Westerly granite. The granite foundations of this earlier building now support a portion of the bank's present building. business of significance is the Utter Company, a local publishing concern that has been in operation for over one hundred years. The buisness was established in the 1850s when John H. Utter bought out the town's first newspaper, the Literary Echo, and began publishing the Narragansett Weekly. Utter was joined by his brother, George, publisher of the Sabbath Recorder, a Sabbatarian Baptist paper, who moved his operations from New York to Westerly in 1861. In 1893 the firm founded a daily paper, the Westerly Sun. Built in 1874, the firm's headquarters at 56-64 Main Street is claimed to be the oldest newspaper building in continuous use in the nation.

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Page 2

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- Cooney, Ralph B., Westerly's Oldest Witness. Westerly: The Washington Trust Company, 1950.
- Denison, Frederick, Westerly and its Witnesses, 1878.
- Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Historic and Architectural Resources of Westerly, R.I.: A Preliminary Report.

 Providence: 1978.
- Westerly Public Library, Clipping files, scrapbooks and photograph collection.

Maps:

- D.G. Beers and Company, Atlas of the State of Rhode Island. Providence: 1870.
- Bevan, John, Map of the Village of Westerly. New York: 1850.
- Everts and Richards, <u>Topographical Atlas of Southern Rhode Island</u>. Philadelphia: 1895.

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16A, 17, 17A, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 48, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, and 82; Plat 57, lots 49 and 50; Plat 66, lots 29, 33, and 34. It also includes that portion of Plat 56, lot 83 occupied by the Westerly Public Library, defined by a line running east from the northeast corner of Plat 56, lot 82, and a line running north from the northeast corner of Plat 56, lot 1.

The boundaries of the district were established to include all of the cohesive commercial spine of the Westerly village, extending north from Broad Street to the railroad, excluding one recent, architecturally inappropriate structure at the north end of Canal Street. Because they are part of the overall fabric of the village architecturally and functionally, the adjacent cluster of civic buildings on Broad Street and the Railroad Station at the north end at Railroad Avenue have been included. The district boundaries extend south from Broad on Union and Main Streets to include two other village institutions, the headquarters of the longstanding local newspaper publisher, the Utter Company, and the Old Town The remains of the once larger residential neighborhood at the northeastern end of High Street has been included because it retains a number of significant early-nineteenth century houses, several of which were moved to build the later commercial buildings. The district extends along High Street almost to the boundary of the Wilcox Park Historic District, excluding only a new, small-scale apartment complex. Generally, boundaries to the district are formed by Wilcox Park on the east, the railroad on the north, and the Pawcatuck River on the west. the business district extends across the river into Pawcatuck, Connecticut, much of the architectural integrity of that area has been lost and therefore has not been included within the Westerly Downtown Historic District.

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Property name

Amendment, Westerly Downtown H.D., Washington

County, RI

Section number <u>4, 7, 9, 10</u>

Page 2

is original metal casements. Much of the original detailing remains in place: paneled wooden doors in the truck bays, iron strap hinges, exterior light fixtures. On the interior, the corner block contains offices and communications center. The second level has living quarters, meeting rooms for the various fire-fighting units housed here, and a large common room with a fireplace. interior is detailed with rough plaster, iron handrails, and dark-stained door lintels. The fire station was built to centralize the operations of a number of independent volunteer fire-fighting companies in Westerly.

Verbal Boundary Description

The district also includes plat 66, lot 35.

#10 Geographical Data

The acreage of the district is increased by 1/4 acre.

New UTMs Α <u>19 263400 4584840</u>

<u>19 263540 4584860</u>

<u>19</u> 263310 4584120

D <u>19 263140 4584220</u>

19 263190 4584680

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name

Amendment, Westerly Downtown H.D., Washington County, RI

Section number 4, 7, 9, 10

Page 1

This document is an amendment to the Westerly Downtown Historic District. In the original nomination (7/19/84) of the Westerly Downtown Historic District, the Westerly Fire Station was inadvertently overlooked. The station is adjacent to the district boundary and clearly falls within the period and area of significance. No change is needed for Section #8; the Fire Station is a contributing building. See attached photo and map.

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this boundary increase meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets the National Register criteria.

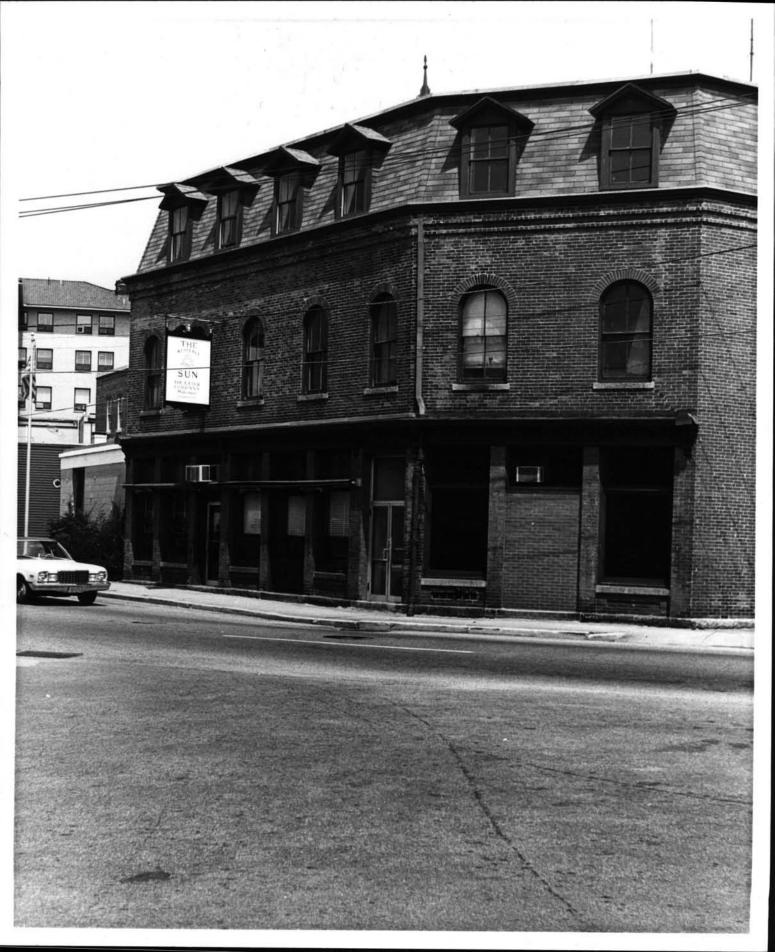
Certifying Official

State Historic Preservation Officer

29 cp 1995

Union Street (continued)

Westerly Fire Station (1927): A long, flat-roofed brick structure set behind Town Hall and across the street from Old Town Hall. The fire station is two levels high and six bays long with a corner office block which also contains a hose-drying tower. The first level has five truck bays, the piers marked with buttresses; the sash on the second level



WESTERLY DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT Westerly, Rhode Island

Photographer: Clifford M. Renshaw

Date: 1984

Negative filed at: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission 150 Benefit Street

Providence, RI

View: Looking northeast at the Utter Company Building, 56-64 Main Street.



WESTERLY DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT Westerly, Rhode Island

Photographer: Clifford M. Renshaw

Date: May 1984

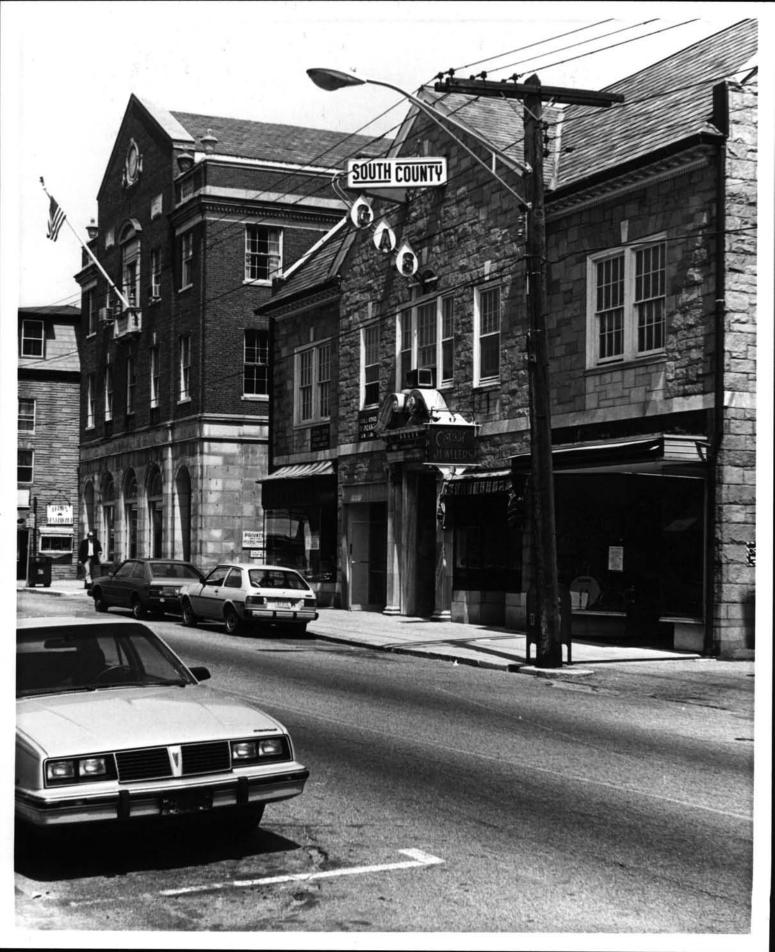
Negative filed at: Rhode Island Historical

Preservation Commission

150 Benefit Street Providence, RI

View: Looking northeast at the Westerly Memorial and Public Library, Broad Street.

Photo #2



WESTERLY DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT Westerly, Rhode Island

Photographer: Clifford M. Renshaw

Date: May 1984

Negative filed at: Rhode Island Historical

Preservation Commission

150 Benefit Street

Providence, RI

View: Looking northeast on High Street showing the South County Gas Company Building (43-51 High Street) and the South County Public Service Company (53-55 High Street).



WESTERLY DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT Westerly, Rhode Island

Photographer: Clifford M. Renshaw

Date: May 1984

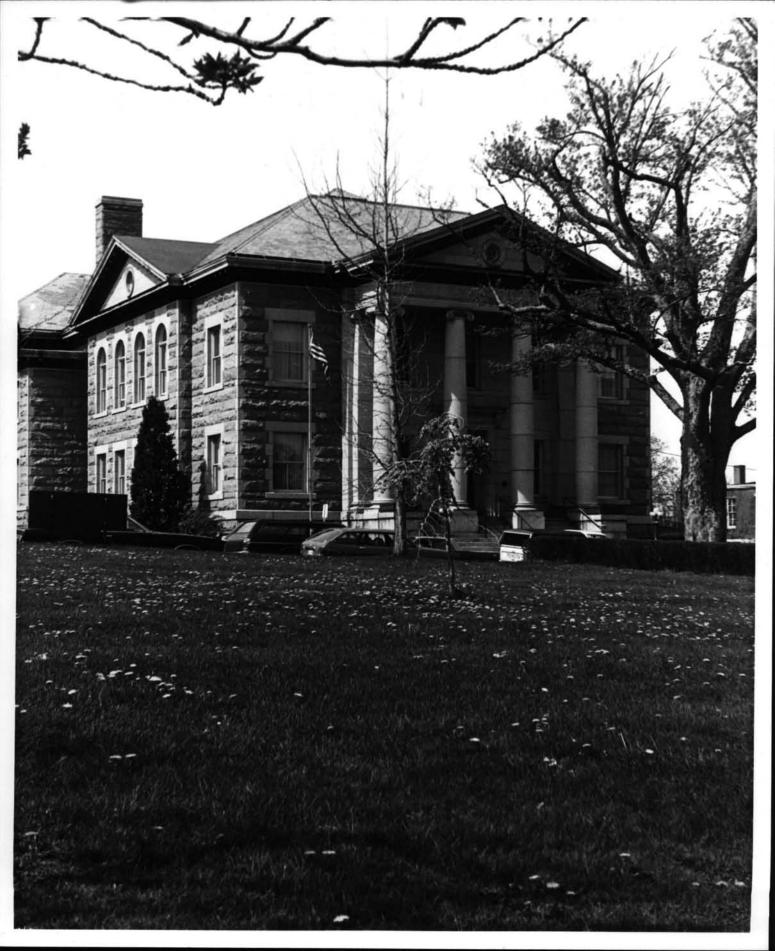
Negative filed at: Rhode Island Historical

Preservation Commission

150 Benefit Street

Providence, RI

View of west side of High Street showing the View: former Industrial Trust Company (14 High Street) and the Brown Building (16-26 High Street).



WESTERLY DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT Westerly, Rhode Island

Photographer: Clifford M. Renshaw

Date: May 1984

Negative filed at: Rhode Island Historical

Preservation Commission

150 Benefit Street

Providence, RI

View: Looking southwest at the Westerly Town Hall and Court House.



WESTERLY DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT Westerly, Rhode Island

Photographer: Clifford M. Renshaw

Date: May 1984

Negative filed at: Rhode Island Historical

Preservation Commission

150 Benefit Street

Providence, RI

View: View of northeast side of Canal Street between Railroad Avenue and High Street.



WESTERLY DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT Westerly, Rhode Island

Photographer: Clifford M. Renshaw

Date: May 1984

Negative filed at: Rhode Island Historical

Preservation Commission

150 Benefit Street

Providence, RI

View: South facade of Westerly Railroad Station, Railroad Avenue.

Photo #8



WESTERLY DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT Westerly, Rhode Island

Photographer: Clifford M. Renshaw

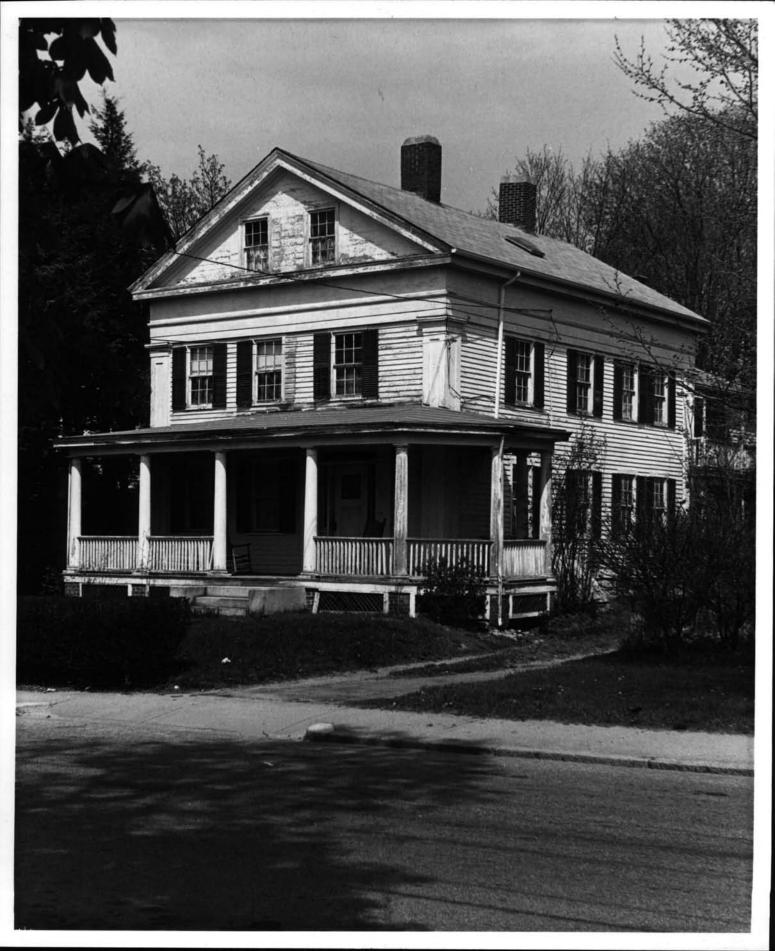
Date: May 1984

Rhode Island Historical Negative filed at:

Preservation Commission

150 Benefit Street Providence, RI

View: Looking northeast at Lemuel Vose House, 88 High Street.



WESTERLY DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT Westerly, Rhode Island

Photographer: Clifford M. Renshaw

Date: May 1984

Negative filed at: Rhode Island Historical

Preservation Commission

150 Benefit Street Providence, RI

View: Looking northwest at the Christopher Stillman House, 100 High Street.

Photo #10





United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

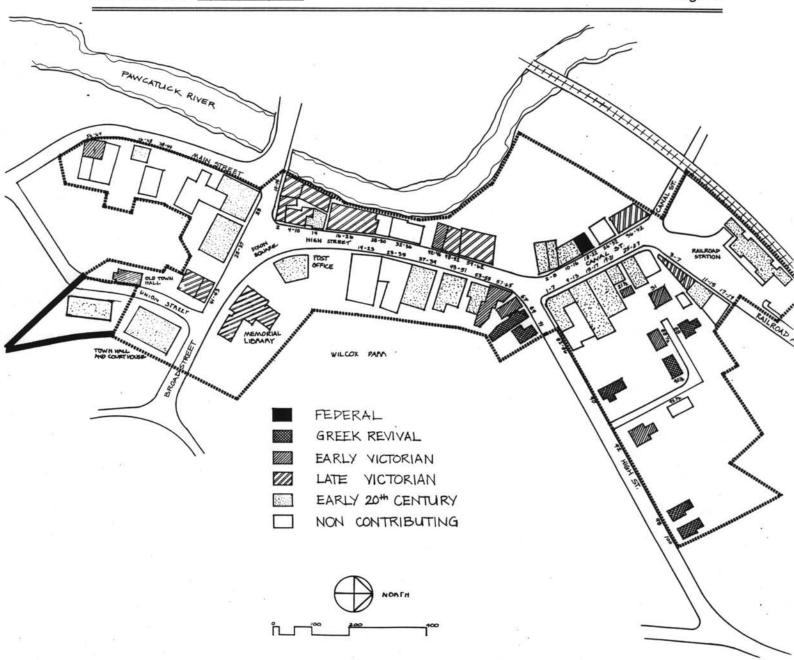
National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Property name

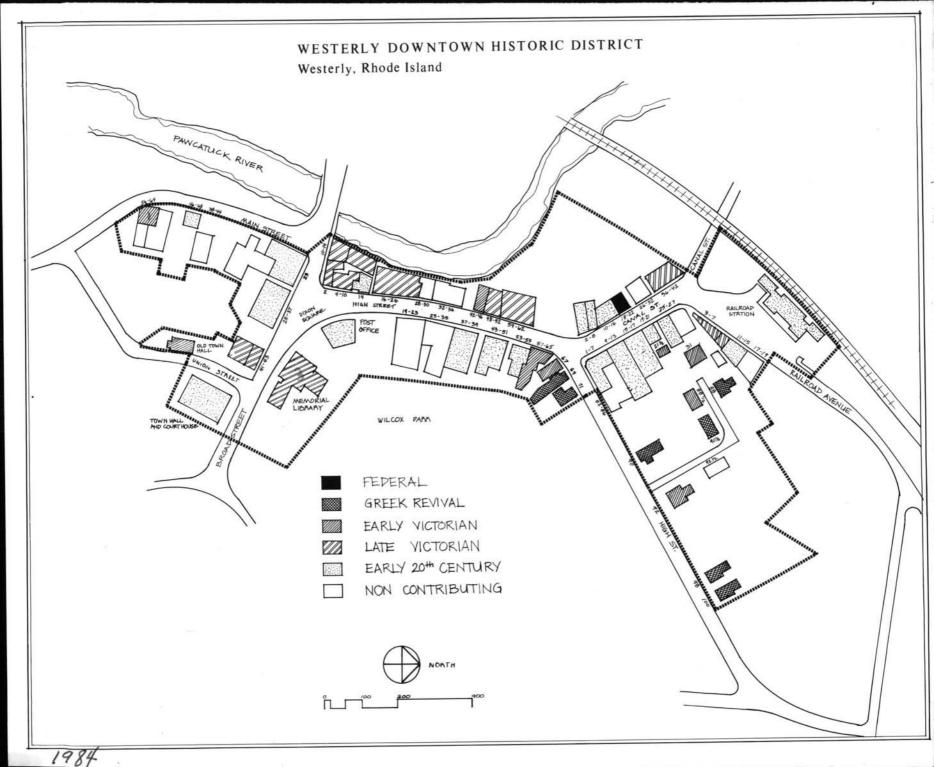
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dotted line - original district boundary solid line - amended boundary





Westerly Fire Station 7 Union Street Westerly Doamtown H.D. Amenament Washington County, R. I.
Photographer: Pamelakennely Date: August, 1994 Negative: R. I. H. P. + H.C. View: West facade. Photo #1 of 1