

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Rhode Island
COUNTY:	Washington
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE	MAY 8 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:
Old Harbor Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
See continuation sheet 1. and Main St. (includes Spring and High Sts.)

CITY OR TOWN:
New Shoreham and Main St

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
#2 -- Tiernan

STATE: Rhode Island CODE: 44 COUNTY: Washington CODE: 009

3. CLASSIFICATION

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

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Multiple

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
New Shoreham Town Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:
Old Town Road

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:
New Shoreham Rhode Island 44

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

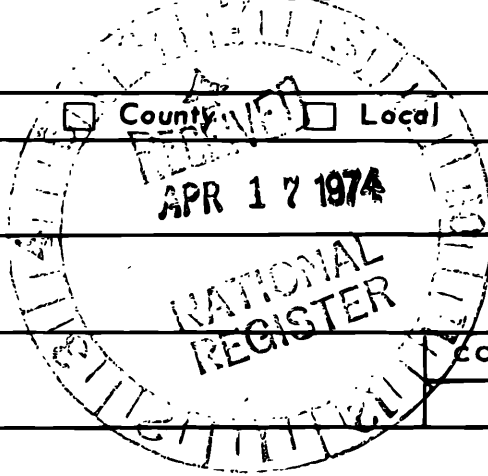
TITLE OF SURVEY:
None.

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:



STATE: _____

COUNTY: _____

ENTRY NUMBER: _____

DATE: _____

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7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Lying some ten miles off the Rhode Island mainland in the Atlantic Ocean, Block Island was first seen by the French explorer Verrazzano, but it was not until 1614 that the first Europeans--under the Dutch explorer Adrian Block--set foot on Block Island, then occupied by the Narragansett Indians. Actual white settlement began in 1662 with the arrival of sixteen families from the Massachusetts Colony, and ten years later, in 1672, the island was incorporated as the Town of New Shoreham under the jurisdiction of Rhode Island. But since there was no natural harbor on the island, the development of what is now known as the Old Harbor was concerned for over two centuries with the vital issue of providing for a suitable landing.

The new island population, being agrarian, had settled in the middle of the island to the South of the Great Salt Pond, and for the first two decades a makeshift landing was maintained on the east side, about a mile southeast of the present government breakwater. In 1680 a breachway was cut into the Great Salt Pond, but the problem of shifting sands soon caused this to be abandoned, and the islanders again turned to the island's east side where, in 1705, they built a pier near the foot of Dodge Street in the present day Old Harbor Village. The only public roads ran north and south to the east of the Great Salt Pond, over what includes Water Street and Spring Street at Old Harbor, and from the landing at Old Harbor to the interior of the island, over today's Dodge Street. West along this latter road a village of sorts formed, but while this village centered a mile from the landing, two houses from this era stand in Old Harbor where the two roads intersected at Dodge Street. Of the typical plain wooden, one-and-a-half-story, gable-roofed houses found on Block Island well into the beginning of the nineteenth century, the John Hooper House (Map # 11) dates from the mid-eighteenth century. A one-and-a-half-story house of similar type, the Andrew Dodge House (Map # 9) dates from the Federal period, and though small, has handsome symmetrical proportions. The windows are larger than those of the Hooper House, and it has a central classicizing entrance with sidelights, pilasters and entablature. Both these houses are now vacant and are in considerable disrepair.

The original 1705 pier of planked pilings, backed up with stones and boulders, had been destroyed in the Great Gale of 1815, and a new landing was provided simply by driving oaken piles into the shallow water below Water Street. The small and peculiar "Block Island boats" could moor here; capable of fishing miles offshore, these boats -- open two-masted lapstraked double-enders -- were nonetheless light enough to be pulled ashore when storms came up. So with a legitimate fishing industry developing, the harbor grew until fifty years later when there were over a thousand such poles, placed in rows, from which the name of Pole Harbor was derived. But such a primitive mode of landing was inadequate for the needs of the island, and chiefly through the efforts of the Hon. Nicholas Ball, State Representative from New Shoreham, funds were appropriated by the U. S. Congress to construct the present breakwater harbor between the south end of Crescent Beach and the rising terrain of the

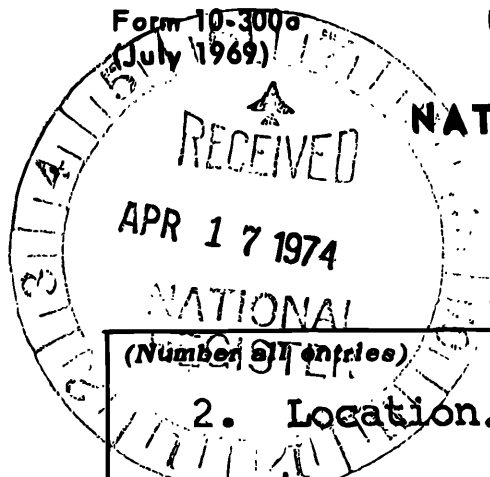
See continuation sheet 1

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) - 1

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Washington	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 8 1974



(Number of entries)

2. Location.

For the purposes of this National Register nomination, the Old Harbor Historic District includes all property within a 2,000 foot radius from the Village Square at the intersection of Water Street, High Street, and Spring Street, the center of said Square being at the statue therein.

7. Description cont.

southeastern part of the island. Built between 1870 and 1876 at a cost of \$155,000, two rip-rap breakwaters of heavy mainland granite, the major and outer extending 1500 feet to the north and the other extending 1000 feet to the east, form the Inner Harbor. An inner basin, constructed to protect the equipment engaged in building the breakwater, was intended to be dismantled but was left at the request of the islanders. Today, with only minor improvements, and the addition of a new ferry landing where the fish shacks were originally, the harbor and basin remain essentially unchanged.

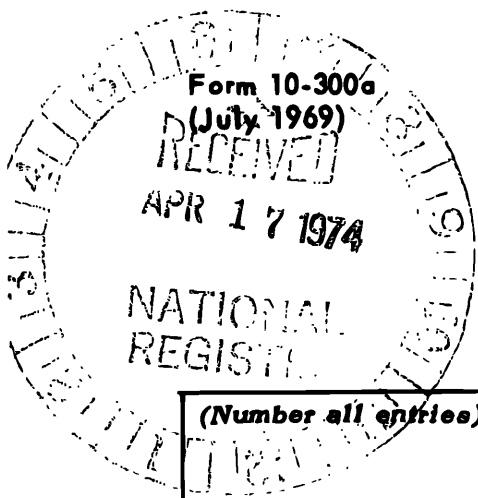
The establishment of a National Harbor began a new era for Block Island. The first public house had been built in 1842, overlooking the landing on the site of the later Adrian Hotel (now the First Baptist Church) (Map # 25), and by the late 1850's three more were operating with combined accommodations for about 100. But it was the government breakwater, and the fact that large steamships could now make the island a stopping place, which fully opened Block Island; and the Harbor District, experiencing the bulk of this new growth, usurped from the old Town Centre relative dominance of the island and became one of the leading coastal resorts of the United States. Most resort facilities concentrated along Water Street and Dodge Street while other hotels and cottages were established on more spacious lots to the south along Spring Street and High Street, and a town square of sorts developed at the intersection of Water, High, and Spring Streets.

Second

The new affiliation with the mainland brought a domesticized sort of Empire style which lent a degree of architectural sophistication previously unknown on the island.

Nicholas Ball, an islander who had made his fortune in the California Gold Rush of the early 1850's and who had just previously been instrumental in bringing the government harbor to Block Island, erected overlooking the harbor the Ocean View, (Map # 42), perhaps the largest hotel in New England and architecturally the trend setter for Old Harbor. A plain though substantial three-story mansard structure 330 feet long capable of accommodating over 500 guests, with a staff of nearly half that, it was burned to the ground in 1966 and its loss represents the single most important hiatus in the historic district. Surrounded by spacious sloping grounds, it dominated the hill to the south of the landing, and the promenade afforded by the veranda across the hotel's facade, together with its

See continuation sheet 2



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) - 2

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Washington	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
MAY 8	1974

(Number all entries)

7. Description cont.

extension as a boardwalk to the Annex (now the Shamrock Inn, Map # 41), was fully 1,500 feet in length.

The Spring House together with the Annex (Map # 31) is the best preserved example of the full hotel as developed on Block Island. Built in 1852, it was considerably expanded during the early 1870's, including the construction of an annex set at right angles to the main building. Three stories high with a flared mansard, cupola, and full-length one-story veranda, it was second only to the Ocean View Hotel in size, being able to take about 250 guests. The ogee gables of the Annex were new architectural developments. About halfway between the Spring House and the landing, set back from the shore on High Street, is the Hotel Manisses, (Map # 26), rebuilt to its present appearance in 1882. Not so large as the Ocean View or Spring House, the Manisses was the best furnished. Architecturally similar to these, it is dominated by the projecting central tower with its pagoda cupola. Though the rear wing has now been condemned, the main block of the Manisses is currently being restored. The Woonsocket House (now the Block Island Historical Society, Map # 22) at the corner of Dodge Street and Corn Neck Road is typical of the several less formal mansard boarding houses built here in the 1870's.

More picturesque, with its mansard interrupted by three large gothic dormers, is the Surf Cottage (Map # 3) on Dodge Street, which dates from 1876. With two different additions to either side, a staggered effect of story height results which, effective on its siting at the beach's edge, is unified by a common veranda and a dominating cupola. The three gothic gables are used again on the Gothic Cottage (Map # 8), also on Dodge Street. 1886 saw the introduction of the "Queen Anne" Style in the lavish, though modestly sized, Adrian Hotel, (Map # 25) located on Spring Street near the Square. This latter building was unfortunately extensively remodeled in 1952 in a manner quite unsympathetic with its original design, as the new home of the First Baptist Church. The Perry Cottage (Map # 18) on High Street, also altered, is another example, though less sophisticated, of the Queen Anne style.

The City Drug Store (Map # 39) on the Square at the intersection of High, Spring, and Water Streets, another typically mansarded structure, is noteworthy for its unusual two-story porch with detailing that completely dominates the building. Opposite is the Old Roller Skating Rink (Map #38) more recently the Empire Theatre, constructed near the end of the nineteenth century; though in only fair condition, it remains well preserved. Later shops along Water Street are more urban, with large plainer blocks fronting more directly on the street line, and with ornamentation more strictly textural.

Resort growth had peaked by the 1890's and thus the Queen Anne and Shingle Styles were never firmly established. Morton's Cottage (Map # 37)

See continuation sheet 3

APR 17 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) - 3

STATE		Rhode Island
COUNTY		Washington
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE	
MAY 8	1974	

(Number all entries)

7. Description cont.

on Water Street, the best example of the Shingle Style, was completely rebuilt in the early part of this century when it was converted into use as a store. The opening of the Great Salt Pond as the New Harbor in 1900 led to the construction of a few resort buildings in that vicinity and the establishment of a cable car connection between the two harbors, with a branch to the bath houses on Crescent Beach where the present State Beach facilities are. Chapel Street had been opened in 1885 with the erection of the First Baptist Church (Map # 1), later burned. And about the turn of the century, the Roman Catholic Church (Map # 2) designed in a simplified classic revival style was also built on Chapel Street; otherwise the street remained largely undeveloped. A fire at the outset of the twentieth century on Water Street severely damaged the National Hotel (Map # 32), Narragansett Hotel (Map # 33), and Ocean Cottage (Map # 34), but they were rebuilt by 1910, all retaining the earlier vernacular mansard mode which still dominated Old Harbor architecture, although the Ocean Cottage, renamed the New Shoreham, has been considerably altered in more recent years.

World War I brought the decline of the resort, and with the subsequent Depression and World War II, Old Harbor never recovered its earlier status. Today the island is experiencing a resurgence as a summer vacation spot, particularly with the construction on the island of a state airport in 1950. Water Street has suffered most through the years because of disuse and more recently from unsympathetic renovation. Fire has taken its toll as well, most notably the Ocean View Hotel and the First Baptist Church. But the district has remained essentially intact from the turn of the century.

Selective Inventory of Structures of Special Historic and Architectural Value

<u>Map No.</u>	<u>Street, Name, Date</u>
	<u>Chapel Street</u>
1	Site of First Baptist Church
2	Saint Andrews Roman Catholic Church, c.1900
	<u>Dodge Street</u>
3	Surf Hotel, 1876
4	Blue Dory Inn, c.1870
5	Drug Store, c.1870
6	Olsen's Cottage, c.1875
7	Rose Store, c.1875
8	Gothic Cottage, c.1880
9	Andrew. Dodge House, c.1800
10	Leslie Dodge House (The Gables Inn), c.1860
11	J. Hooper House, c.1750
12	Mansard House, c.1875

See continuation sheet 4

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

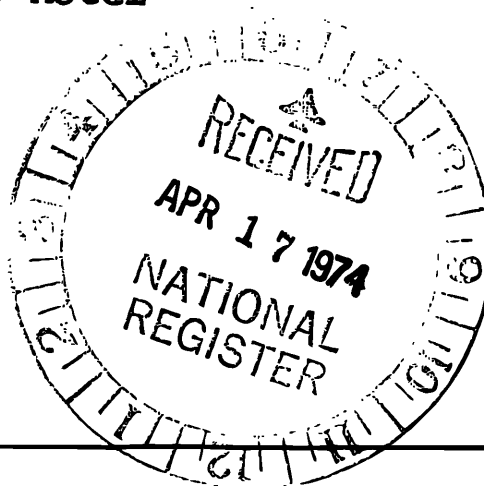
(Continuation Sheet) - 4

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Washington	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER MAY 8 1974	DATE

(Number all entries)

7. Description cont.

<u>Map No.</u>	<u>Street, Name, Date</u>
	<u>High Street</u>
13	House, c.1870
14	Union Hotel, 1883
15	Hartford Hotel, c.1880
16	Mitchell Cottage, c.1865
17	Masonic Lodge, c.1876
18	Perry Cottage, c.1890
19	Bellevue Hotel, c.1885
20	Eureka Hotel, c.1880
21	Highland House, c.1890
	<u>Main Street</u>
22	Woonsocket House (Block Island Historical Society), c.1875
23	Woonsocket House Annex (Block Island Inn), c.1880
24	The Yellow Kittens, c.1890
	<u>Spring Street</u>
25	Adrian Hotel (First Baptist Church), 1886
26	Hotel Manisses, 1882
27	1661 Inn, c.1870
28	Rose Cottage, c.1880
29	Atlantic Hotel (Norwich Hotel), c.1880
30	House, c.1885
31	Spring House and Annex, 1852/c.1872
	<u>Water Street</u>
32	New National Hotel, 1888/1904
33	Narragansett Hotel, c.1875/c.1908
34	Ocean Cottage (New Shoreham Hotel), c.1875/c.1910
35	Pequot House, 1882
36	Odd Fellows Hall, 1872
37	Morton's Cottage (Dept. Store), c.1890
38	Roller Skating Rink (Empire Theatre), c.1880
39	City Drug Store, c.1880
40	C. C. Ball General Store, c.1880
41	Shamrock Inn (Ocean View Annex), c.1875
42	Site of Ocean View Hotel



SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

During the 200 years prior to the development of resort facilities, Block Island was basically a self-sufficient community, dependent upon farming and fishing for its economy, isolated from the mainland and its culture. Old Harbor's significance lies chiefly in its transformation from a landing site for this early community and modest fishing hamlet, to one of the most popular resorts in America.

The home of the "ablest sea-going undecked craft in the world", as the Block Island boat was then termed, Pole Harbor became a significant processing center for swordfish, tuna, mackerel and cod. But by 1867 Congress had recognized the necessity of providing a harbor of refuge here near the entrance of Long Island Sound, and the construction of the breakwater at Old Harbor was to be the most important factor to the development of New Shoreham. As early as 1870, the island was being celebrated as the "Bermuda of the North", far from the "malarial and contaminating land breezes", and yet within a five-hour sail from New York or Boston and only two hours from Newport and New London. With its "health giving qualities of breezes laden with sulphates of magnesium and potassium, chloride of sodium, bromine, iodine, and others of nature's remedies distilled fresh from the ocean laboratories", Old Harbor's development paralleled those of the Isles of Shoals off the New Hampshire coast, and Mt. Desert Island off the Maine coast. So while the island had begun to develop its recreational potential as early as the middle of the nineteenth century, by the 1880's its reputation as an elegant Victorian resort was established.

Old Harbor was the only considerable village, with most of the hotels and stores, the postoffice and telegraph station, the mechanic shops, the halls and saloons, facilities for sailing and sport fishing, bowling, tennis, golf, and the like. A boardwalk ran to the bathing pavilion at Crescent Beach, and when the New Harbor was opened up in 1900 in the Great Salt Pond, a railway connected the two harbors with a spur running to the beach. In a two-month summer season, Old Harbor was accommodating in more than thirty hotels and cottages 3,000 visitors, nearly triple the year-round population of the island. The Spring House, the largest of the hotels left, could take more than 250 guests at a time, and on its 25 acres of land offered tennis courts, a baseball field, and the Mineral Springs.

See continuation sheet 5

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Balle, George, "An Architectural Study of Block Island," unpublished thesis, Brown University, 1974.
 Livermore, S. T., Block Island: An Illustrated History, Map and Guide, Providence, 1901.
 Pettee, Edward E., Block Island, Rhode Island, Boston 1884.
 United States House of Representatives, Harbors of Refuge at Point Judith, Block Island, and Great Salt Pond: Letter from Secretary of War, 1903.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
NW	Degrees Minutes Seconds 41° 10' 36"	Degrees Minutes Seconds 71° 33' 55"		Degrees Minutes Seconds 0	Degrees Minutes Seconds 0	
NE	41° 10' 36"	71° 33' 09"				
SE	41° 09' 59"	71° 33' 09"				
SW	41° 09' 59"	71° 33' 55"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 175 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
James Gibbs

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission DATE: March 1974

STREET AND NUMBER:
John Brown House, 52 Power Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island CODE: 44

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: Frederick Williams

Title: State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: APR 12 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Arthur M. ...
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 5/8/74

ATTEST:

W. J. ...
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 5.7.74

NW 17/28/74
 0671954/036582/613N
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS
 SW 19/28/74
 00209511/046486/61MS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) - 5

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Washington	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 8 1974

(Number all entries)

8. Significance cont.

Recently, the island has undergone a changing economy and is once again becoming a popular summer vacation area. Old Harbor is still the only considerable village and remains sharply defined, as a geographical district, amidst the sprawling farm cottages of the countryside. As part of a proposed Islands System, zoning on Block Island would restrict most new development to the area around Old Harbor and the Town Center. And while the Old Harbor District could accommodate some future development, the immediate threat is the present lack of sympathy to its fine architectural heritage.

