

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet 55 North Kingstown MRA Item number 7

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NAME: Ezekial Gardner House
LOCATION: 297 Pendar Road
OWNER: Mr. & Mrs. Edwin Bellamy
P.O. Box 112
North Kingstown, Rhode Island 02852
CONDITION: Good; Altered; Original site

DESCRIPTION:

The Ezekial Gardner house is a mid-eighteenth century house, with a gambrel roof, central chimney plan, and simple woodwork which are characteristic of early rural North Kingstown houses. The house and an early twentieth-century barn stand at the end of a long, wood-lined lane that leads from Pendar Road.

The south facing house is one-and-a-half-stories; its front door, which has side-lights, is centered in the clapboarded, five-bay facade of the original section. A tall gambrel roof covers the one-story base, with dormers on the north side.

The five-room floor plan with three fireplaces is a typical central chimney plan, though the rear central room is somewhat smaller than usual. A one-story, gable-roofed, wing was added to the west end, probably about 1800.

The second floor of the house is reached by a steep, two-run stairway. There was a single fireplace on the second floor, but it is now covered. Interior finish hides the pegged construction of the gambrel roof. Cased posts and beams are visible on both stories. Original two-panel doors remain throughout, with more recent hardware. Full-height chimney breasts with raised panels are also original.

The barn/garage to the west was built in the 1920s in the Colonial Revival style. Its gambrel roof repeats that of the house. No other out-buildings remain.

The house is surrounded by fields and woods, through which thread some dry-laid stone walls; these may have marked agricultural divisions, but the land has not been farmed for decades.

PERIOD: 1700-1799

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Agriculture, Architecture

SPECIFIC DATES: Unknown, probably mid-18th-century, with later 19th-century addition.

BUILDER: Unknown

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SIGNIFICANCE:

The Gardner House is significant as an eighteenth-century rural house, a homestead at the core of what was once a large farm and a seat of one of the Narragansett planter families. The house is exceptionally well preserved, with few alterations since its west wing was constructed in the late eighteenth century; in addition, the setting of the Gardner House is still well-preserved, with its surrounding acreage (some of it returned to forest) still undeveloped.

Documentation of the property is difficult owing to the destruction of many early North Kingstown records and also because of the large number of Gardner relations and the many tracts of land they held. In any case, it seems likely that an early owner was Ezekial Gardner (1712-1802); Gardner was apparently a large-scale planter, owning a large dairy where thousands of pounds of cheese were produced each year. He was politically active and influential as was his son Ezekial, born in 1738, who became a Justice of the Peace and also served on the Rhode Island Supreme Court. The will of yet another Ezekial Gardner (dated 1808) specified that his land and buildings should be leased to support his wife and four unmarried daughters except the "new end of my dwelling house on my homestead farm." This addition had a "great room" and chamber, and is probably this house's west wing. The house and a large tract of land remained in possession of the Gardner family until the early twentieth century.

This is one of three extant mid-eighteenth century-houses built by members of the Gardner family in the vicinity of Pendar Road, once a section of the Post Road. It is the only one of three which is so well preserved.

ACREAGE: 97.31 acres

QUAD NAME: Wickford, R.I.

UTM REFERENCES:

A 19 293520 4600650

B 19 293790 4600110

C 19 293290 4600000

D 19 292970 4600450

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

The boundary is defined as the line of Assessor's Plat 51, lot 1, and includes the Gardner House and barn, their immediate setting, and some acreage which has been associated historically with the Gardner Farm. Much of the land is no longer open fields, but some stone walls remain which appear to outline field divisions.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

Photo numbers 46-48