

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 3 1974

1. NAME

COMMON:
Little Compton Common Historic District

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
see continuation sheet #1

CITY OR TOWN:
Little Compton

STATE Rhode Island, 02837	CODE 44	COUNTY: Newport	CODE 005
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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
multiple

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:

STATE: APR 17 1974	CODE
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Little Compton Town Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:
School House Lane

CITY OR TOWN:
Little Compton

STATE Rhode Island, 02837	CODE 44
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1956 Federal State County Local

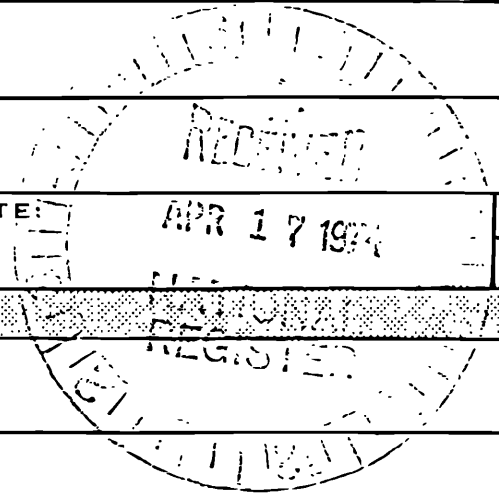
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:
Independence Avenue and 1st Street, S. E.

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE: District of Columbia	CODE 11
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE:
COUNTY:
ENTRY NUMBER
DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Little Compton Common Historic District is a small area in a somewhat elevated part of the spread-out, rural and seashore township of Little Compton in the south-eastern part of Rhode Island and forms the "headquarters" of the township. It is, however, not like most other New England commons in that it has no real town or village development--streets, lanes etc.--surrounding it or radiating from it, though roads from the countryside parts of the township lead to the Common, skirt it, or pass close by. It forms instead an isolated plat which is nevertheless the focal point of Little Compton as a whole.

This Historic District is a long triangular one, with its base to the east on a road which comes in from the northern countryside and quickly passes out to further countryside at the south; from this short stretch of roadway two longer streets, School House Lane to the north of the Common and Meeting House Lane to its south, form its boundaries and run down to meet at the apex of the triangle, from which West Road branches off.

The Common itself is an embanked, flat, grassed area with some large old trees and, at its west end, some plantings of shrubbery; at its east end stands a conspicuous landmark, the white-painted, spired United Congregational Church, and about half of the Common is taken up by an old, stone-walled burying-ground: there are no other buildings upon the Common proper. The roadway and the two "Lanes" which form the Common's three sides also have large old trees and have a number of buildings, and another cemetery, facing upon the Common. The bordering road to the east has a small library, two dwellings and some XIX-Century commercial buildings on it; School House Lane to the north has mostly the township's few public buildings, while Meeting House Lane on the south side has dwellings, a cemetery and some shop and loft buildings, some embanked above stone retaining-walls.

Surely never heavily-trafficked, the entire Common area is one of picturesque quietude, dominated by the bulk and spire of the Congregational Church and the grey ranks of vertical old stone markers in the adjacent burying-ground. The bordering streets, with their various but not domineering structures, all fortunately well maintained, form a visually interesting perimeter to the Common and are very important parts of the Historic District's totality. This "totality" consists of only the handsome green Common and less than thirty buildings etc. upon it or facing on it (excluding subsidiary structures such as garages, barns and annexes), and these are listed on an inventory and shown on a map which accompany this nomination. A few may be given special mention:

To the east of the Common (No. 2 on map) is the Alfred Bodington house of 1850, a commodious two-and-a-half-storey, gable-roofed residence in the early Victorian bracketted style. It displays originality

(See Continuation Sheet 2.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. 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 checked="" 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 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>Unspoilt town</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	<u>common</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Music		_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation			_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Little Compton township's history as a colonial settlement goes back to 1674 or earlier, and originally it was an Indian domain (Saugkonet or Sakonnet) presided over by a female sachem named Awashonks, who was friendly to the newly-arriving white people before, during and after King Philip's War. With her acquiescence, these settlers laid out and allotted among themselves farmland properties which now fill or define the township, which was at first included in the Plymouth (Massachusetts) Colony but was annexed to Rhode Island in 1747. While this township is about twenty square miles in area, its centre or focal point has ever since the 1670's been that small triangle called Little Compton common, and here since then has been the seat of local government and the business- and meeting-place of inhabitants from round about. As a marker at the edge of the Common informs, a "town house" or hall where the elders or council could meet existed there as early as 1683, and the burying-ground on the Common is said to date from 1675-1677.

So, this was and is the centre of Little Compton--its only compactly built-upon section, though none of the buildings upon or around it is truly "antique"--in an otherwise spread-out community interlaced by rural roadways or lanes to the seashore and Sakonnet harbour. Over three centuries, the buildings of the Common area have been replaced many times, so that what we now see are all XIX- or XX-Century structures rather than any remaining from Indian War or Revolutionary War times. There are dwellings, a public school, the Town Hall, the post office, a library, a church, meeting-halls, a little fire-house, two cemeteries and some modest commercial structures. This is the place to which people still come to pay their taxes, to post their mail and buy "General Merchandise" at the old shop of "Est. of C. R. Wilbur," and where the young go to school: it remains the heart of the township and, with its church and burying-ground, a delighting "island" of visual pleasure in its area.

Here, in the centre of the cemetery on the Common is the memorial to Elizabeth Alden Pabodie, supposed to be the first white woman born in the New England colonies, and at the west end of this stone-walled cemetery are bronze memorial plaques commemorating the war dead of recent decades; in the Union Cemetery above Meeting House Lane stands

(See Continuation Sheet 3.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

U. S. Works Progress Administration. Federal Writers' Project: Rhode Island. A Guide ... (Boston, Massachusetts, 1937), pp. 422-423.

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	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	41 ° 30 ' 37.58" "	71 ° 10 ' 33.33" "		0 ' ' "	0 ' ' "	
NE	41 ° 30 ' 37.58" "	71 ° 10 ' 14.91" "				
SE	41 ° 30 ' 29.34" "	71 ° 10 ' 14.91" "				
SW	41 ° 30 ' 29.34" "	71 ° 10 ' 33.33" "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 15 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Richard B. Harrington, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

DATE: Nov. 18, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:
John Brown House, 52 Power Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence

STATE: Rhode Island, 02906

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: Richard B. Harrington
Title: State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: APR 12 1974

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

W. P. Montrose
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 5/3/74

ATTEST:
W. P. Montrose
Keeper of The National Register

Date: 5.2.74

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

(Continuation Sheet) - 1

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
MAY 3	1974

(Number all entries)

2. Location

Little Compton Common Historic District may be delineated as follows: Beginning at the northern side of the intersection of Simmons Road and Willow Avenue the district continues south along Willow Avenue (which becomes South Commons Road) to the intersection of South Commons Road and Meeting House Lane. Both Schoolhouse Lane and Meeting House Lane are included in the district from their intersection on the east with Willow Avenue and South Commons Road to their conjunction at the western end of the Common. The district continues south along West Road for 150 feet from the point where it turns sharply away from the Common. The boundaries of the district extend back 150 feet from both sides of the thoroughfares delineating the district to include the buildings and areas shown on the district map.



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

(Continuation Sheet)- 2

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAY 3 1974

(Number all entries)

6. Representation in Existing Surveys.

Statewide Survey of Historic Buildings: Little Compton.
1971 State
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission,
John Brown House, 52 Power Street,
Providence, Rhode Island, 02906.

7. Description.

in its window treatment and has a fine, ornate cast-iron fence along its street frontage, and there are cast-iron anthemia interestingly used as crestings on the main entrance porch and across the porch of a side ell.

On the same roadway, south of some old commercial buildings, is the Ida W. Smith house (No. 6 on map), said to date from 1800 originally-- three bays wide, two and-a-half storeys high, with the door at one end of the street elevation. This now presents a ladylike Victorian front, with a one-storey porch supported by sawn, pierced and fretted posts.

The Old (Methodist) Meeting House (No. 8 on map) at the south-east corner of the Common is a sizeable, gabled, two-and-a-half-storey building with a lower, later rear ell and dates from 1825. Now shingled and apparently always simply-trimmed, its main decorative feature is a Greek Revival entrance porch supported by panelled Doric piers. *

Quite dominating the Common is the United Congregational Church (No. 7 on map), which to-day has its entrance facing south. Such was not always the case, for this large clapboarded, gabled structure was built in 1832 in traditional meeting-house form, presumably in simple Greek Revival style: a high, one-storey church auditorium with three tall triple-sashed windows along each side. Around 1872, however, the meeting-house was raised to allow for the insertion of a new ground storey; its pulpit-end was reversed from south to north, and its south end was given a projecting frontal in vernacular Victorian Gothic style, complete with a bonnetted belfry, upon which in 1874 a tall spire was erected. This church and its sizeable cemetery area to the west (No. 19 on map), dating from 1675, form the chief landmark and visual attraction of Little Compton Common and, indeed, of the whole surrounding township.

Just off the west end of the Common sits the low, long Brownell house of 1823 (No. 19 on map) behind its low stone wall. In its main portion this is a traditional Rhode Island centre-chimney, storey-and-a-half, clapboarded cottage five bays wide. However, there is a four-bay extension stretching to the north, giving a lengthy and picturesque frontage, and the ends of both the original house and its extension are shingled. Inside, the principal stair is unusual for a house of this modest type, for

*Note: doorway is c. 1840, and roof has been replaced.

(See Continuation Sheet 3.)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) - 3

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
MAY 3 1974	

(Number all entries)

7. Description.

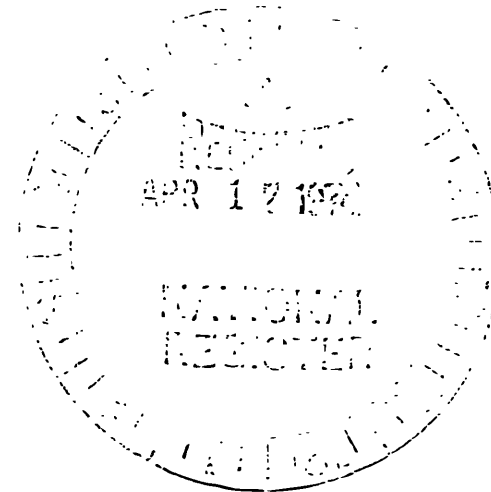
instead of taking the usual cramped turn at landing level, it branches off there to left and right. This building is to-day a house museum.

Facing the Common on its north are most of the townships's "official" buildings, including the Town Hall (No. 26 on map), a large, rectangular clapboarded structure of two-and-a-half storeys, built in 1880 in quite retardataire Victorian style, its chief adornment being a hooded main doorway. Next it (No. 25 on map) is the former village schoolhouse, now housing an American Legion post. This dates from 1840 and has had some frontal remodelling, though otherwise it retains its simple and pleasing Greek Revival aspect and trim, except that the simple, louvred cupola for the school-bell at some point received a Victorian bracketted cornice.

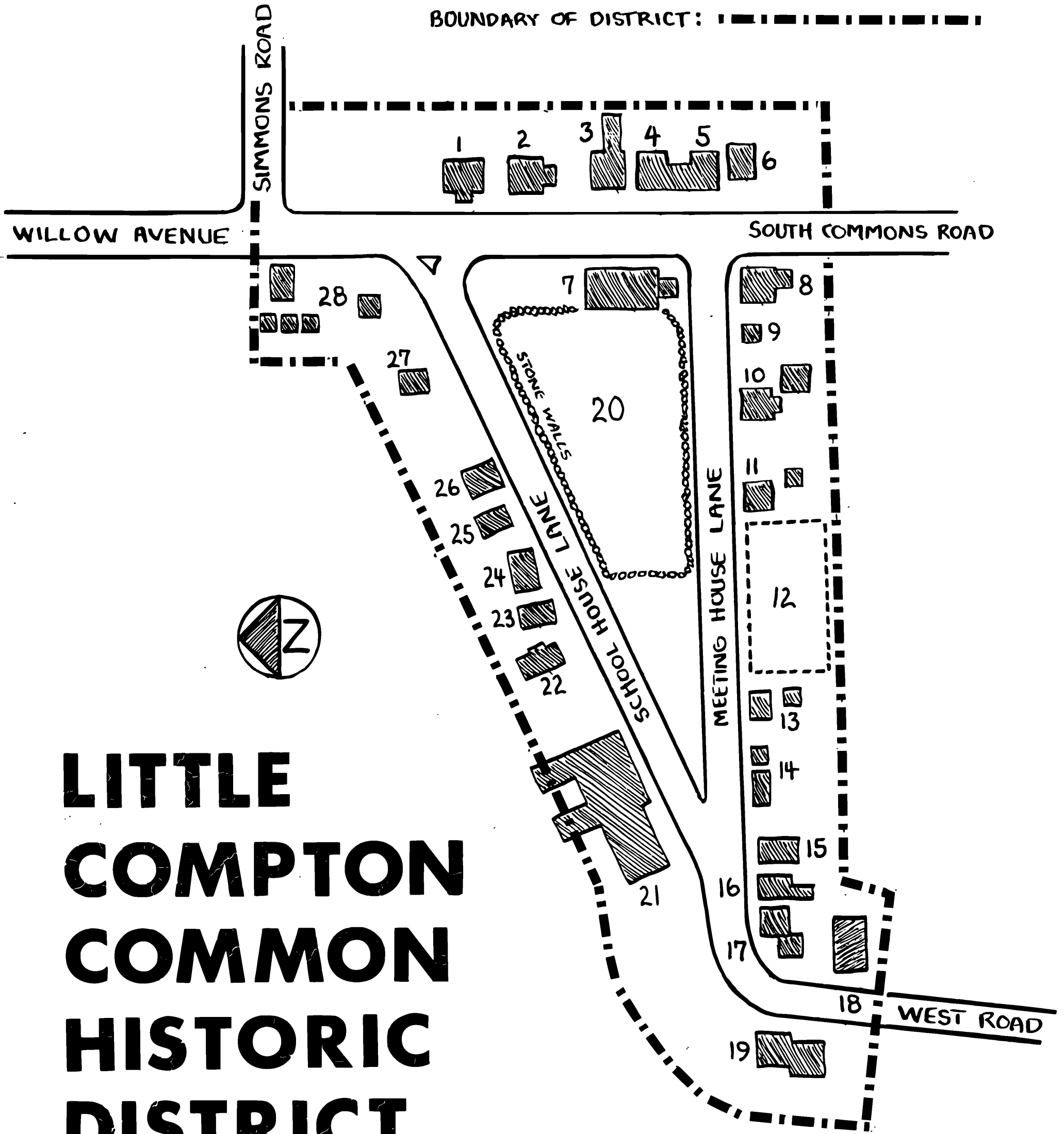
8. Significance.

a Civil War memorial.

Because Rhode Island among the New England states has few handsome green commons, the preservation of this one, beloved and much acclaimed, is especially important.



BOUNDARY OF DISTRICT: - - - - -



LITTLE COMPTON COMMON HISTORIC DISTRICT

not to scale

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE	Rhode Island	
COUNTY	Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE
		MAY 9 1974

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Little Compton Common Historic District
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: see Continuation Sheet #1

CITY OR TOWN: Little Compton

STATE:	Rhode Island	CODE	COUNTY:	Newport	CODE
		44			005

3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE: R.I. Historical Preservation Commission, 52 Power Street,
Providence, R.I.

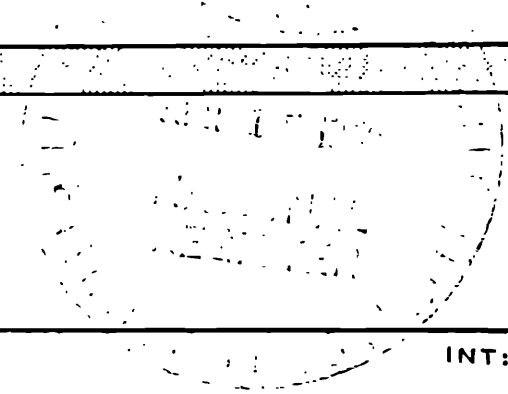
SCALE: sketch map; not to scale

DATE: March, 1974

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.



New York Co.

LITTLE COMPTON COMMON HISTORIC DISTRICT,
LITTLE COMPTON, RHODE ISLAND.

Inventory of Buildings.



No. on map.

1. Brownell Library, by Charles Loring, 1929. Georgian Revival style; one-and-one-half storeys, four bays wide, gable roof, brick wall cover, entrance in pedimented, projecting wooden vestibule.
2. Alfred Bodington house, c. 1850. Simple Italianate bracketed style; three bays wide plus side ell of two bays, two-and-one-half storeys--ell slightly lower, gable roofs, clapboard wall cover, central bracketed one-storey entrance porch with square piers on pedestals, cast-iron cresting on entrance porch and on porch across front of ell, cast-iron frontal fence.
3. Commons Restaurant, c. 1840. Simple Greek Revival style; now moderately altered; three bays wide on first floor, two windows on second, gable-end to the street, modern wood-shingle wall cover (probably replacing clapboards, flat-roofed extension to the north, main entrances on west side, extensive old ells to the east facing on a driveway.
4. Commercial building with apartment above, c. 1900. Nondescript style; four bays wide, two-and-one-half storeys, gable roof, bowed and plain shop-windows on first floor, pseudo-Colonial-style entrance between shop-windows, linked by one-storey connector with No. 5 on map.
5. Est. of C. R. Wilbur (store), c. 1840. Simple Greek Revival style, moderately altered; three bays wide, two-and-one-half storeys, gable-roofed with end to the street, clapboarded, central entrance between modern, enlarged plate-glass shop-windows.
6. House, c. 1800 ff. Simple late Colonial style with Victorian sawn and bracketed adornments and enlargements (two-storey southern bay); three bays wide, two-and-one-half storeys, chimney at north end, one-storey porch with jig-saw work across front, entrance on west in southernmost bay.
7. United Congregational Church, 1832, 1872, 1874. Greek Revival style with Victorian Gothic additions; two storeys (the lower one inserted in 1872), three bays wide and three long bays from front to back, gable-roofed with end to the street, clapboarded; originally a plain meeting-house, revised and enlarged 1872, 1874 with "Gothic" frontal addition, belfry-tower, spire.
8. Old (Methodist) Meeting House, 1825, 1839. Greek Revival style with addition of Victorian brackets; two-and-one-half storeys, five bays wide, gable roof, clapboarded, central one-storey front entrance porch with panelled Doric piers, long two-storey ell at south.

No. on map.

9. "Art Shop," XX Century? Small, one-storey, gable-roofed shed-like structure, clapboarded.
10. House (now United Congregational Church Parish House), c. 1850-1860. Victorian bracketted style; two-and-one-half storeys, five bays wide, gable roof, clapboarded, central one-storey entrance porch, barn etc. across rear.
11. Cottage, XX Century. Nondescript style; one-and-one-half storeys, shingled, entrance on north side.
12. Union Cemetery, 1850. Long lot above embankment, enclosed by low iron fence, numerous grave monuments, Civil War Memorial on pedestal.
13. House, 1935. Cape Cod cottage style; one-and-one-half storeys, five bays wide, gable roof, shingled, centre doorway with sidelights on north side.
14. Cottage, XX Century. Nondescript style; one-and-one-half storeys, gable roof, shingled, entrance on north side.
15. House, c. 1870. Nondescript style, two storeys, gable roof with end to street, clapboarded.
16. Wheelwright and blacksmith shop (now Pottery Shop), 1870. Nondescript style; two-and-one-half storey loft building, three bays wide, gable roof with end to street, clapboarded, entrance near centre of north side with large studio window above.
17. Post Office building, 1960. Nondescript-cum-Cape Cod cottage style; one-and-one-half storeys, three bays wide with one-and-one-half storey ell at south-west, clapboarded, shed dormer across front.
18. House, 1860. Early Victorian, one-and-one-half storey, gable roof with end to street, raised dormers, clapboarded.
19. Brownell House, 1823. Cape Cod cottage style; one-and-one-half storeys, five bays wide with four-bay extension to the north, clapboarded with ends shingled, entrance with sidelights in centre of main house, secondary front entrance in extension.
20. United Congregational Church Cemetery or Town Burying Ground, c. 1675. Partially surrounded by low stone wall, on embanked Common site, numerous thin, old vertical grave markers, memorial plaques in stone wall and shrubbery plantings at west end.
21. Julia Wilbur School, 1929ff. Pseudo-Georgian style; long one-storey hip-roofed structure with stone wall cover, modern addition at west, main entrance within one-storey wooded portico with paired columns on south front, small central cupola.

No. on map.

22. Fire House, 1870. Nondescript style; one-storey, gable roof with end to the street, shingle wall cover, wide frontal door.
23. Sakonnet Lodge, I. O. O. F. (originally Methodist Church), 1840. Greek Revival style; two storeys, above a high basement, three bays wide, gable roof with end to street, clapboarded, panelled corner pilasters, ground-level central entrance on south with Victorian hood on sawn brackets.
24. Grange Hall, 1904. Shingle style; two-and-one-half storeys, six bays wide, gable-and-hipped roof, shingle wall cover, varied window placement, two entrances--one recessed--on south side.
25. American Legion Post (originally school-house), 1850. Greek Revival style; one-and-one-half storeys, gable roof with end to street, clapboarded, paired windows at centre front with entrance door to their right, fanlight in gable, square louvred belfry at front of building with later Victorian bracketted cornice.
26. Town Hall, 1880. Simple Victorian style; two-and-one-half storeys, gable roof with end to street, three bays wide, clapboarded, central main entrance under bracketted hood with paired windows above.
27. Cottage, XX Century. Nondescript style; one-and-one-half storeys, gable roof, shingled, entrance on south side.
28. Cottage, XX Century. Nondescript style; one-and-one-half storeys, gable roof, shingled, one-storey porch across front; stands on site of a burnt XVIII-Century house, has old barns and sheds at rear.