

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JAN 24 1985

date entered FEB 21 1985

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

1. Name

historic N/A

and or common EAST PLYMOUTH HISTORIC DISTRICT

2. Location

street & number East Plymouth Road & Marsh Road N/A not for publication

city, town Plymouth N/A vicinity of

state Connecticut code 09 county Litchfield code 005

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name See Continuation Sheet

street & number

city, town _____ vicinity of _____ state _____

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Plymouth Town Clerk

street & number 19 East Main Street

city, town Terryville state Connecticut

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title State Register of Historic Places has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1984 federal state county local

depository for survey records Connecticut Historical Commission

city, town 59 South Prospect Street Hartford state Connecticut

7. Description

Condition excellent good fair deteriorated ruins unexposed**Check one** unaltered altered**Check one** original site moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

East Plymouth is a small settlement at the intersection of East Plymouth Road in the northeastern corner of the town of Plymouth, Connecticut. There are eight 18th or 19th century houses clustered around the intersection, at the southeast corner of which stands the focal point of the district, the 1792 St. Matthew's Church (Photograph 3). Adjacent to the small clapboarded church, now used as a residence, is a graveyard (Photograph 4) with many headstones dating from the 1790s and early 1800s. In addition to the houses there are four barns with vertical-board siding (Photograph 7), probably dating to the late or mid 19th century, as well as smaller sheds and outbuildings. Much of the land in the district on the west side of East Plymouth Road is open pasture, while east of the houses on the east side of the road, the land is wooded and rises sharply toward Marsh Pond and its outlet, today operated as a reservoir by the City of Bristol.

The houses in the district include three 1 1/2-story, central-chimney houses dating to about 1800 or earlier (Photographs 1, 8, 11); three early 19th-century houses set gable-end-to-the-road with simple Federal or Greek Revival details (Photographs 6, 9, 10, 12), one of which, #8, was for many years used as a store; and two vernacular post-1850 houses (Photographs 2, 5), of which one (#2) has some Italianate-inspired features. Four of the eight houses have clapboarded exteriors and four have modern siding materials. Five of the houses have had significant modifications to their facades, including added, replaced, or enclosed porches and in one case, Victorian shingles added to the front gable of a Greek Revival-style house. The church and all the houses and barns were judged to contribute to the character of the district.

Former Appearance

Historic maps of 1852 and 1874 show that there has been little change in the district from what was once there. Old deeds indicate that there was a barn associated with nearly every house, and there is evidence for small workshops, including a shoemaker's shop near #1 and a blacksmith shop near the small garage north of the large barn, # 6. The village's district school was located very near the southeast corner of the church, and large stones still there may mark its foundation. A toy factory, saw and gristmill, and tanneries once were powered by Marsh Pond Brook, but time and reservoir construction make it difficult to discern any evidence of these activities. The brook is not part of the district.

An inventory of historic structures follows.

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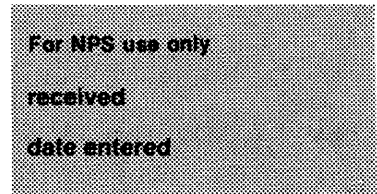
List of property owners:

Map/Block/Lot	Owner & Address	Inventory Number	Contributing/ Noncontributing
EAST PLYMOUTH ROAD			
24/19/5	Michael A. & Joy Myszka East Plymouth Road Terryville, CT 06786	1	Contributing
24/19/4	James & Cheryl Corrigan East Plymouth Road Terryville, CT 06786	2	Contributing
24/29/3	Society of the Parish of St. Matthew - c/o Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut 1335 Asylum Avenue Hartford, CT 06105	-	Contributing (cemetery)
24/19/1	Francis A. & Roasalie Fawcett East Plymouth Road Terryville, CT 06786	3	Contributing
18/8/3,4	Earl A. & Alvina J. Laser East Plymouth Road Terryville, CT 06786	4	Contributing
18/8/5	Steven M. & Patricia M. Craig East Plymouth Road Terryville, CT 06786	5	Contributing
23/10/6 (part)	Earl D. & Virginia S. Scoville Preston Road Terryville, CT 06786	6,7	Contributing
24/10/7B	Ann K. Pepin East Plymouth Road Terryville, CT 06786	8	Contributing

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List of property owners:

Map/Block/Lot	Owner & Address	Inventory Number	Contributing/ Noncontributing
24/10/7A	Leslie O. Pepin East Plymouth Road Terryville, CT 06786	9	Contributing
	MARSH ROAD		
16/8/2	Luella R. Tolles Marsh Road Terryville, CT 06786	10	Contributing

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Description (continued):

INVENTORY OF CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

East Plymouth Road

1. Small 1 1/2-story house, c.1800, with its ridge paralleling the road and a lean-to at the rear (Photograph 1). Large brick central chimney. Entrance presently centered on the south end. Modern wood-shingle siding replaces or obscures original wide clapboards visible in c.1935 W.P.A. photograph. Modern sash. Owned from 1827 to c.1860 by tanner and shoemaker Josiah Kimberly.

2. Two-and-one-half-story house, c.1870, with an L-shaped plan; gable end of larger portion faces the road (Photograph 2). Segmental-arched attic window with bracketed hoodmold. Modern siding, enclosed porch across ell. Built for Frederick Kimberly, son of shoemaker Eber E. Kimberly.

3. ST. MATTHEWS CHURCH, 2 1/2-story former meetinghouse (now a residence), built in 1792 (Photograph 3). Clapboarded exterior. Round-arched windows with small-pane sash. Round-arched entrance, centered on the three-bay west (gable end) elevation, has double batten doors on strap hinges flanked by plain pilasters; over the entrance is a molded arch with keyblock. Originally faced south but was turned in 1842. Late 19th-century eave trim and vestibule recently removed. Interior is largely original with wide-board floors, beaded-board horizontal wainscot, turned columns, and gallery with fluted designs between raised-panels on the front. Associated cemetery with many late 18th and early 19th-century headstones (Photograph 4) immediately to the south.

4. Two-story house, c.1867, with its three-bay gable-end facade fronting on East Plymouth Road (Photograph 5). Entrance on the right. Two second-floor windows, each elevation; those on the sides are reduced in height. Small brick central chimney. Mostly six-over-six sash. Shed-roofed porch with turned posts, c.1900, on two sides. Large barn close to the road north of the house. Built for farmer Virgil Wilson on the site of an earlier house.

5. Clapboarded 2 1/2-story house, c.1839, oriented with its gable end facing the road (Photograph 6). Three-bay facade with plain entry on the right. Elliptical attic window with radial muntins; other windows have twelve-over-eight sash. Plain boxed cornice with no return. Large brick central chimney. One-story ell to the rear. Large barn to the north. Probably built around 1839 by blacksmith James E. Johnson.

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Description (continued):

6. Large barn, probably mid-19th-century, with vertical board siding (Photograph 7). Ridge of the gable roof parallels the road. Large sliding door centered on the broad side. Smaller barn attached at right angles to the northeast corner. Garage on stone foundation north of barn appears to approximate site of a c.1850 blacksmith shop.

7. Gambrel-roofed 1 1/2-story house, 18th century (Photograph 8). Entrance centered within five-bay facade. Large stuccoed central chimney. Modern siding and sash. Flat-roofed porch across front on five square stone piers. Interior includes fireplaces and extensive paneling.

8. Greek Revival 2 1/2-story house (former store), c.1840, oriented gable end to the road (Photograph 9). Clapboarded exterior. Entry in the center of the three-bay facade (Photograph 10) has a fluted surround with circular bosses in the corner blocks. A similar treatment enframes the rectangular attic window, whose muntins define narrow boarder panes surrounding three large center panes. Full return of the molded cornice. Mixture of six-over-six, two-over-two, and eight-over-eight sash, the latter in the extra-width first-floor facade windows. The shed-roofed porch across the front is treated as a Classical entablature with a row of small dentils; presently supported on iron columns rising from a concrete floor. Probably built by merchant Orrin Preston and continued as a store through the end of the 19th century.

9. Clapboarded 1 1/2-story house, 18th century (Photograph 11). Large brick central chimney. Entrance centered within five-bay facade has sidelights and fluted-board-and-corner-block surround. Twelve-over-eight sash. Interior includes some paneling. The entry is a Greek Revival-era change.

MARSH ROAD

10. Greek Revival 2 1/2-story house, c.1830, oriented with its gable end facing the road (Photograph 12). Pilastered entry on the left of its three-bay facade, under a c.1900 shed-roofed entry porch with spindled frieze, plain posts, and a skirt formed of panels with star-shaped cut-outs. Exterior is clapboarded except for the front gable, which has diagonal board-and-batten siding and staggered wood shingles. Full return of cornice and narrow entablature. Windows have two-over-two sash and wide heads with molded caps. Gambrel-roofed barn and sheds to the rear. Probably built c. 1830 by clockmaker Wyllys Hinman and sold in 1833 to Luther Driscoll.

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Significance (continued):

The New Cambridge Churchmen built their first meetinghouse on Federal Hill, now in the center of the town of Bristol, in 1754. Early arguments over the division of ministerial taxes, as well as outright persecution of Churchmen during the American Revolution, caused the two communities of Anglicans and Congregationalists to grow apart. Many Anglican families located near Chippens Hill in the extreme northwest part of New Cambridge, and others spilled over into Plymouth (then part of Watertown) and Harwinton. Anglicanism was strongest in western Connecticut.

After the Revolution, the small church on Federal Hill, which had suffered from lack of regular use during the war, was repaired and occupied for a while. But the condition of the building, as well as the concentration of Anglican families in the western part of what in 1785 had become the town of Bristol, made desirable the erection of a new church, one whose location would be convenient to the Chippens Hill families as well as to those in the eastern part of Plymouth who had withdrawn from St. Peter's. In 1791 a new parish was formed to serve these families, and in December of that year the parish voted to begin erecting the present St. Matthew's church.

The architecture of the church reflects its origins in a rural Anglican community. It has the simple form and unadorned exterior typical of 18th-century meetinghouses, as well as the broad rectangular plan (32' by 42') which made for a nearly square audience room. The interior likewise was finished with materials familiar to country builders: wide-board floors and raised paneling. The only departure from the overall simplicity are the fluted decoration on the gallery and the pilaster-and-arch surround on the main entrance; these are but simplifications of designs readily available from sources such as Gibbs' Book of Architecture.

In all these respects the building is like contemporary Congregationalist meetinghouses. In this period, the old style of plain meetinghouse, resembling an ordinary residence except for its large size, was only beginning to give way to the more elaborate church-like designs characteristic of the early 1800s. The Episcopalians of East Plymouth, in their beliefs and form of worship, were quite similar to their Congregationalist neighbors. The emphasis was on preaching, not liturgy, and vestments were not common. The church was originally fitted with a high central pulpit, an indication (along with the lack of a chancel) that the reading of the Word of God and the preaching of the minister were foremost in the minds of the congregation which built this church. Long and narrow proportions, Gothic windows with stained glass, chancels, large altars, and choirs were later developments in Episcopal church architecture which accompanied a greater emphasis on processions, ceremony and liturgy.

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Significance (continued):

The Episcopalians undertook one departure in church architecture which might be interpreted as a statement of their religious allegiance: they voted to make one tier of windows rectangular-shaped and the other tier arched, an arrangement popularized by Gibbs and one which had been used for the prominent colonial Anglican churches of King's Chapel, Boston and Trinity Church, Newport. For some unknown reason, all the windows were made round-arched in shape. The people of East Church, as this area was sometimes called, also distinguished their building by having it consecrated, a ceremony performed in 1795 by Bishop Samuel Seabury.

The story of St. Matthew's was repeated (with variations) throughout the state. As dissenting groups split off during the Great Awakening, communities found themselves divided into religious factions. In eastern Connecticut, "New Light" proponents withdrew into Separatist churches, many of which later joined with Baptist congregations. In central Connecticut, several Church of England parishes were founded by people unable to accept New Light Congregationalism. Many of these groups survived in one form or another into the 1790s, and contributed to the religious diversity of the state. Ultimately, religious pluralism and the quest for religious freedom led to the Constitution of 1818, which disestablished Congregationalism as the religion of Connecticut.

Historical Development of East Plymouth

Until after the Revolution the area which became East Plymouth was not highly settled; indeed, even as late as 1803 some of the acreage in East Plymouth was still common land as yet undivided among townspeople. After the Revolution, Anglican families from New Cambridge bought property and settled near the site of their church. Among the first were the Gaylord and Tuttle families. In addition to building houses and barns and farming the land, these settlers built small-scale industries along Marsh Pond Brook. Among the earliest was a tannery run by William Gaylord and later by Constant Loyal Tuttle, and grist and carding mills run by Luman Preston. Because of the roads which led to Bristol and Harwinton, the place became a minor crossroads, with at least one "merchant's store" in the 1790s (associated with site #7) and a tavern. There also is evidence for blacksmith shops in the village, and in the early 19th century East Plymouth became the site of a district schoolhouse, located just to the southeast of the church.

Throughout the 19th century, East Plymouth continued to be highly dependent upon agriculture. Nearly all the properties at one time included barns, and most residents were either full or part-time farmers. The village's industries were tied to the needs of the farming community: a gristmill for grinding their grain and blacksmiths to repair implements and shoe their draft animals. Even men with other occupations spent much of

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Significance (continued):

their time farming: blacksmith J.R. Coy, who lived in house #9, had 34 acres under cultivation in 1860 and raised a large amount of potatoes.

The area did feel the effects of industrialization taking place in nearby towns. One resident, Wyllys Hinman, was a clockmaker, and William Yale had a small factory at the outlet of Marsh Pond which made toy wheelbarrows. These activities, however, were soon outpaced by large-scale mechanized manufacture then underway in places like Bristol and Bridgeport. By the time of the Civil War, the age of the country mechanic had passed. As agriculture declined as well, East Plymouth toward the end of the 19th century was becoming a place to live for people who worked elsewhere. Residents in 1874 included not only farmers, a blacksmith and tanners, but two workers in the Terryville lock factory as well. Moreover, turnover in the population had been so great that Episcopal St. Matthew's was no longer the church for the people of the village, and the membership of the church grew ever smaller.

The buildings of the district are closely entwined with the history of the village. House #1 was owned for seven or more decades by members of the Kimberly family, beginning with Josiah, who took over the tannery business started by the Gaylord and Tuttle families. His son Eber E. Kimberly was a tanner as well and also made the leather into boots and shoes. House #2 is also associated with the Kimberly family. House #4 was built about 1867 by farmer Virgil Johnson, while #5 was first owned by blacksmith James C. Johnson. The gambrel-roofed house, #7, was owned throughout most of the 19th century by gristmill owner/farmer Samuel Preston and his son Orrin, a merchant who built the house next door (#8) originally as a store. Among the owners of house #9, besides the blacksmith John R. Coy, were toy manufacturer William Yale, and clockmaker Wyllys Hinman.

Architectural Evaluation

The houses in the district are typical of what one would expect in a rural farming area. The oldest houses, like St. Matthew's church, follow no formal style but rather reflect the vernacular building traditions of New England. Of the earliest houses, #9 (Photograph 11) is a fine example of its type: the clapboarded, five-bay facade, small windows fitted with small-pane sash, stone foundation, large central chimney and interior paneling are all representative of the 18th-century 1 1/2-story house. The gambrel-roofed variant, # 7 (Photograph 8), is more altered but share many of the key 18th-century characteristics with its neighbor.

Stylistic features appeared in the Greek revival period, with pilastered entries, fluted-board window and door surrounds, full cornice returns, and rows of dentils recalling elements from Classical Greek architecture.

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Significance (continued):

Although the district's mid-19th-century buildings followed the by then common practice of orienting the house with the gable end facing the road, architectural elaboration still fell far short of what would be found in wealthier or more cosmopolitan areas. Even accounting for some loss of detail through siding and alteration, the importance of the district's Greek Revival-period houses is as representative examples of homes of rural persons of modest means, and not as architectural masterworks.

Summary

East Plymouth has historical and architectural importance because of the landmark St. Matthew's church, a relatively rare example of 18th-century Connecticut meetinghouses and one associated with a historically significant religious minority, and because of the surrounding houses and barns. The village's buildings recall the development of East Plymouth as a center for the surrounding farm families, with the homes of millers, blacksmiths, merchants, and farmers, as well as a former store. Though somewhat altered, the buildings retain much of the form and appearance they presented in the period in which the village developed. Modest examples of vernacular architecture, they help to create a sense of time and place which is unique to East Plymouth.

¹Kelly, in his Early Connecticut Meetinghouses, describes twelve 18th-century meetinghouses which, like St. Matthew's, retain most of their historic appearance, with another seven which had been altered extensively in the 19th century. Kelly does not include the Worthington meetinghouse in Berlin, until recently a Victorianized school building.

²The phrase was included in a letter from area Churchmen to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in London explaining the origin of their churches in the conflicts of the Great Awakening. See Lucy C. Jarvis (ed.), Sketches of Church Life in Colonial Connecticut (New Haven, 1902), 62.

³Congregational meetinghouses were not consecrated and there was no special sanctity associated with the building, often used for secular as well as religious meetings. Bishop Seabury died in 1796.

⁴Because both structures were in the early 1800s part of a large 30-acre tract, it proved impossible to separate out these particular parcels and trace them back to the exact date of their construction.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below				
prehistoric	archeology-prehistoric	community planning	landscape architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	religion
1400-1499	archeology-historic	conservation	law		science
1500-1599	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> agriculture	economics	literature		sculpture
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	education	military		social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	art	engineering	music		humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	commerce	exploration/settlement	philosophy		theater
1900-	communications	industry	politics/government		transportation
		invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	other (specify)
Criteria A, C					local history

Specific dates See Inventory, Item 7 **Builder/Architect** Not known

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Summary Statement of Significance

The significance of the small group of structures which make up the East Plymouth Historic District is that they illustrate well the historical development of the area: located at the juncture of two country roads, East Plymouth in the late 18th and 19th centuries served as a religious, commercial, and service center for the farm families in the surrounding neighborhood. Of all the buildings, St. Matthew's Church (#3) is perhaps the most individually distinguished: dating from 1792, it is the third oldest remaining Episcopal church in the state, and in fact, it is one of only about a dozen 18th-century meetinghouses, either of the established Congregational church or of dissenting groups, left in Connecticut. Built in the vernacular tradition, St. Matthew's is well-preserved and in its architecture reflects both the commonalities and differences of Episcopalians and their Congregationalist neighbors. The district's other buildings provide a physical setting for the church and are also important for their own merits. Although most have been somewhat altered from their historic appearance, all retain sufficient historic fabric that their age and original form are obvious, and as the houses of farmers, millers, merchants, and blacksmiths and other craftsmen, they are directly related to the historical role played by the village. Finally, the district's several barns and representative meadow land recall East Plymouth's interdependence with the agricultural economy of the surrounding area.

St. Matthew's Church

St. Matthew's church was built in reponse to a regrouping of Church of England adherents in the towns of Plymouth, Harwinton, and Bristol during the 1780s and 1790s. Some of the people came from St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Plymouth, which had displeased many members in 1790 when the church voted to build its new meetinghouse in Plymouth Hollow (now Thomaston) in the extreme western part of the town. Members living in the eastern part of Plymouth saw the relocation as posing a great inconvenience.

The greater part of the original membership of St. Matthew's came from the church which had been founded in nearby New Cambridge (Bristol) in 1747. The New Cambridge Churchmen, as they called themselves, were former Congregationalists who could not abide the "New Light" theology of minister Samuel Newell. Like many Connecticut Anglicans who had been raised in the Congregationalist religion, they saw the Church of England as a refuge from the "flood of confusion" brought on by the Great Awakening, a way of returning to a more moderate religion.²

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Bibliography (continued):

Plymouth Land Records, 1795 - , Plymouth Town Clerk.

Ryan, J. Francis. Plymouth, Connecticut, 1776-1976. Priv. pr., 1976.

U.S. Census Office, manuscript returns, 1850 census of population and census of agriculture.

W.P.A. Census of Old Buildings, c.1935, Plymouth Folder, Connecticut State Library.

Maps:

County Atlas of Litchfield, Connecticut. New York: F.W. Beers, 1874.

Woodford, E.M. Map of the Town of Plymouth. Philadelphia, 1852.

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Geographical Data (continued):

UTM Coordinates:

A: 18/666420/4518340 4618270
B: 18/666520/4518200
C: 18/666540/4518160
D: 18/666500/4518160
E: 18/666540/4518000
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J: 18/666540/4517890
K: 18/666510/4517890
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O: 18/666370/4518120
P: 18/666330/4518240
Q: 18/666400/4518260
R: 18/666390/4518330

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Geographical Data (continued):

Verbal Boundary Description

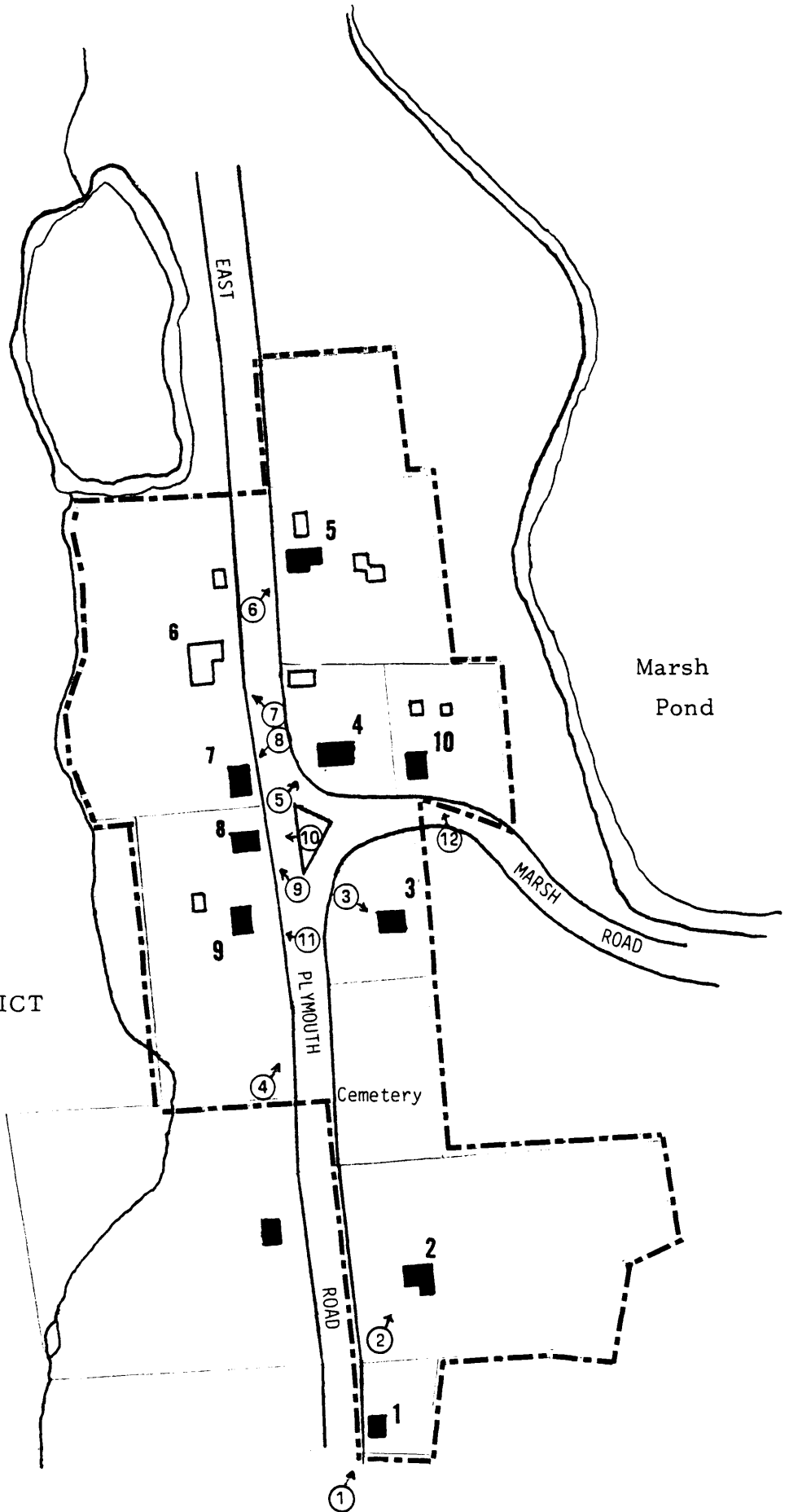
Beginning at the northwest corner of Lot 5, Block 8, Map 16, as shown in the records of the Plymouth Assessor, the boundary runs easterly along the northern line of that lot, then southerly along the eastern lines of Lot 5 and Lot 10 to Marsh Road. It runs westerly along the northern edge of Marsh Road, then crosses the road and runs southerly, following the eastern boundaries of lots 1, 3, 4 and 5, Block 19, Map 24. At the southwest corner of Lot 5, it turns and runs westerly to East Plymouth Road. It runs northerly along East Plymouth Road and then crosses the road, running westerly along the southern line of Lot 7, Block 10, Map 24. At the southwest corner of Lot 7 it turns and runs northerly along the west line of Lot 7 to the southern line of Lot 6. It follows that line westerly about 50' to the small stream which runs from the pond in the meadow. It follows the stream northward to its outlet from the pond, then runs at right angles to East Plymouth Road eastward back to the road. It crosses East Plymouth Road and runs along the east edge of the road northward back to the first point.

Boundary Justification

The boundary reflects the extent of remaining historic resources in East Plymouth. North of the district on East Plymouth Road there are no structures of any kind for a considerable distance, and east on Marsh Road, the City of Bristol's reservoir and spillway makes a physical and visual boundary. South of the district is a c.1930 "Cape Cod" style house on the west side of the road and there are two c.1900 small plain houses on a lane leading eastward south of the district; none of these appeared to add to the themes of the nominated area.

The width of the district on either side of East Plymouth Road reflects present-day property lines in every case but one. At the northwest corner of the district is a very large parcel which includes not only the house and barn in the district but also another house far to the north on Preston Road. In order to include the old house and barn, as well as representative agricultural land, while at the same time avoiding excessive acreage, the boundary follows the course of the small stream and terminates at a pond opposite the property on the east side of the road. In this way, the boundary is formed by a easily discerned physical feature and runs at a distance from East Plymouth Road comparable to the rest of the district.

Because of rechanneling for the reservoir construction and the lack of discernible mill remains, the brook was not included in the district.



EAST PLYMOUTH HISTORIC DISTRICT

Plymouth, Connecticut

- 3** Inventory Numbers
- ⑤** Photo Positions
- Houses
- Barns & Other Outbuildings
- - -** District Boundary

Scale: 1" = 200'