

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

**NRIS Reference Number:** 96001321

**Date Listed:** 11/21/96

Willow Dell  
**Property Name**

Washington  
**County**

RI  
**State**

Single-Family Houses in Rhode Island MPS  
**Multiple Name**

**This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.**

  
**Signature of the Keeper**

11/21/96  
**Date of Action**

=====  
**Amended Items in Nomination:**

**8. Statement of Significance: Period of Significance**

The documented period of significance for the property is the same as the significant dates: 1752; 1871; 1881; 1945.

This information was confirmed with Ann Angelone, RISHPO staff, by telephone.

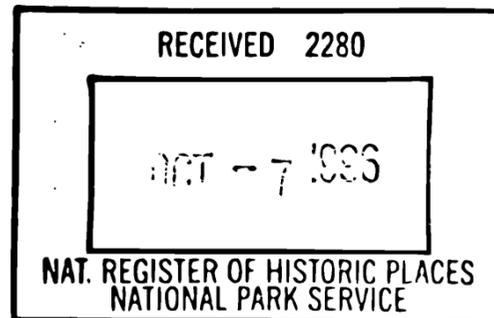
**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without attachment)

1290

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# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



## 1. Name of Property

historic name: Willow Dell

other name/site number: Weeden Farm

## 2. Location

street & number: 2700 Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry Highway

not for publication: N/A

city/town: South Kingstown vicinity: N/A

state: RI county: Washington code: 009 zip code: 02879

## 3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>5</u>	<u>      </u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u>      </u>	sites
<u>2</u>	<u>      </u>	structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	objects
<u>8</u>	<u>      </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: Rhode Island Single-Family Houses

Property name Willow Dell, Washington County, Rhode Island

**4. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

See continuation sheet.

Frederick C. Williamson

9/30/96

Signature of certifying official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**5. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register

Robert L. Swase

11/21/96

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

**6. Function or Use**

Historic: DOMESTIC  
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE

Current: DOMESTIC  
AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE  
RECREATION AND CULTURE

Sub: single dwelling  
agricultural outbuildings  
agricultural fields

Sub: single dwelling  
storage  
agricultural field  
sports facility

Property name Willow Dell, Washington County, Rhode Island

**7. Description**

Architectural Classification:

COLONIAL

Other Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Materials: foundation STONE: Granite roof Asphalt  
walls WOOD: Shingle other \_\_\_\_\_

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

X See continuation sheet.

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period(s) of Significance: 1752 \_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates: 1752 1871 1881 1945

Significant Person(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X See continuation sheet.

Property name Willow Dell, Washington County, Rhode Island

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property: approx. 7 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>19</u>	<u>286720</u>	<u>4585690</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description:  See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification:  See continuation sheet.

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/Title: Virginia H. Adams, Senior Architectural Historian; and Catherine deJarnette Vieth, Assistant Architectural Historian

Organization: The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. Date: Sept. 1995

Street & Number: 210 Lonsdale Avenue Telephone: (401) 728-8780  
 City or Town: Pawtucket State: RI ZIP: 02860

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### Description

Willow Dell, also known as the Weeden Farm, is a seven-acre property screened by vegetation from the south side of Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry Highway in semi-rural South Kingstown. The property includes a mid-eighteenth-century farmhouse enlarged and remodeled in the twentieth century, a nineteenth-century stable/barn converted into a summer residence in 1950, three garage and storage outbuildings, one pump house site, a memorial stone fountain (structure), and a stone wall system (structure). The property originally extended over 600 acres, from Wash Pond north of the highway all the way south to Block Island Sound. Much of that land has been sold over the years, and only the seven acres remaining around the farmhouse complex is being nominated.

The main block of the house was built by Colonel Jeremiah Bowen for his daughter in 1752. The house has both expanded and contracted through its history, but its historic core the retains significant spatial and material integrity. The one-and-a-half story, flaring gambrel roof structure faces east--an unusual orientation for rural eighteenth-century farmhouses--and has a large brick center chimney with a corbelled cap and a five-bay facade with center entrance. The entrance is below a five-light transom and flanked by plain pilasters with fluted caps. Two ells extend to the west and south respectively: a nineteenth-century two-story, three-by-two-bay, gable-roof ell stretches to the rear and a 1945 one-and-a-half-story gambrel roof ell with a shed-roof porch is set back from the plane of the facade. The walls are sheathed in natural wood shingles, and the simple wood trim is painted. The windows are twelve-over-twelve and six-over-six double hung sash; one or two original twelve-over-twelve windows remain on the rear elevation.

The house as it stands today is largely a result of restoration and renovations made in 1945. The house was significantly enlarged in the nineteenth century. In 1871, a two-story, flank-gable addition was made to the south end, doubling the size of the house. Ten years later, a two-and-a-half-story gambrel-roof addition was attached to the south end of the 1871 addition. These three sections, including the original block of the house, were very distinct from one another; the second addition dominated the overall structure with its towering mass. These two large additions

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were removed during the 1940s restoration, overseen by Providence architect F. Ellis Jackson.<sup>1</sup>

On the interior the plan follows the standard Rhode Island five-room plan with some modifications dating to 1945. The entrance and stair hall are centered in front of the large central brick chimney, which shelters a smoke room within its mass. All of the rooms encircling the chimney have simple wood mantels with wide, plain friezes, and decorative moldings around the firebox and below the mantel shelf. To the south of the entrance hall three rooms have been combined to create a large L-plan room, used as a living and dining room. The dining area at rear center was the original kitchen, evidenced by the large cooking fireplace and beehive oven. A large sitting room the first floor of the south addition. The rear ell contains the service wing, with kitchen, laundry, and storage areas on the first floor. On the second floor a plan similar to that on the first floor obtains. There, however, the large L-plan room is not repeated, and small bedrooms occupy the space under the eaves.

The house occupies a landscaped site that has evolved through its history. Granite entrance posts mark the entrance from the street. A curving driveway leads from the highway around the north side of the house to the parking area and garage in the rear. The Wager Weeden Memorial Fountain, a stone marker commemorating Weeden's ability to bring fresh water to the property from Wash Pond, is located just outside of the posts. The property still retains European beeches planted in the late nineteenth century. A network of field-stone walls envelops the house and creates a visual link among house, outbuildings, and fields. The walls slope down to create a defined entrance to the fields south of the house. This entrance, as well as a formal garden no longer extant, were designed in the 1920s by local landscape architect Sibley Smith. Only the stone entrance remains of the formal garden. Two tennis courts, constructed circa 1910, are located southeast of the house, just south of the stone wall.

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<sup>1</sup>Jackson (1879-1950), 1909 graduate of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, was a leading Rhode Island practitioner of Georgian and Colonial Revival. Jackson clearly esteemed historic buildings, for as early as 1923 he listed "Old Houses Restored and Renovated"--including Providence's Nightingale-Brown and Captain James Benson Houses--as a category on his curriculum vitae.

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The large, late nineteenth-century one-and-a-half-story stable is east of the house and faces the south. It succeeds an earlier stable, destroyed by fire in the 1890s, but stands farther away from the house than the earlier stable. In 1950, it was converted into a summer rental property. It is clad in wood shingles with simple wood trim at the doors and windows. The asphalt-shingled gambrel roof has three shed dormers with six-over-six double hung sash. The windows and doors on the facade have been altered to accommodate the transformation from stable to living space, although original small casement windows remain on the side elevations. The simple entrance is centered on the facade. The remains of a pump house are evident in the stone wall between the house and the stable.

The late-nineteenth-century shingled garage is located to the west of the house. It was originally a wood shed before its transformation into a garage in the mid-to-late twentieth century.

Two late-nineteenth-century, agricultural shingled outbuildings are located southwest of the house: a long, low, one-story cow barn and a one-and-a-half-story barn/garage with granite-block east wall.

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### Photographs

3. Photographer: The Public Archaeology Lab., Inc.
4. Date: August 8, 1995
5. Negative: R.I. Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission  
(Above information pertains to all photographs)
  
6. View northwest of facade
7. Photo #1 of 7
  
6. View northwest of rear elevation and kitchen ell.
7. Photo #2 of 7
  
6. View northeast of rear elevation and kitchen ell.
7. Photo #3 of 7
  
6. Interior view of fireplace and beehive oven
7. Photo #4 of 7
  
6. View northwest of garage
7. Photo #5 of 7
  
6. View west of farm outbuilding
7. Photo #6 of 7
  
6. View south of stone wall and field
7. Photo #7 of 7

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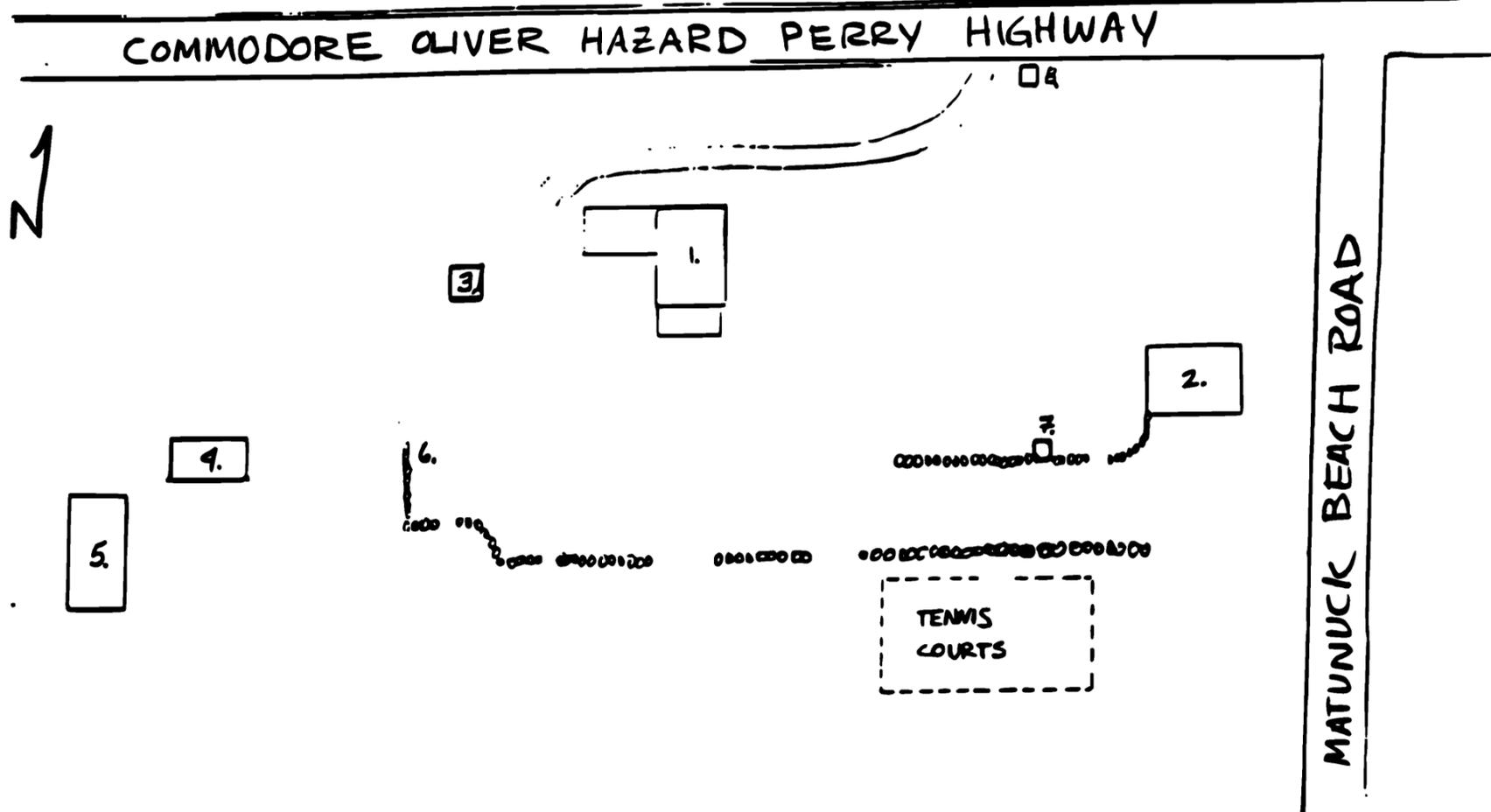
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WILLOW DELL Sketch Map  
Not to Scale



1. House
2. Stable
3. Garage
4. Barn/garage
5. Cow Barn
6. Stone wall system
7. Pump house remains
8. Wager Weeden Memorial Fountain

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FIGURE 1  
HISTORIC VIEW  
Source: Brown 1937:138



WILLOW DELL, HOMESTEAD OF THE WEEDEN'S, WITH LATEST ADDITION. ITS PHOTOGRAPH WAS TAKEN ABOUT 1881, AND SHOWS "AUNT ELVIRA," ONLY DAUGHTER OF WAGER WEEDEN, SEATED UPON THE PORCH, AND ELIZA BARNES WEEDEN, ELDEST DAUGHTER OF WILLIAM B. WEEDEN AND GREAT GRANDDAUGHTER OF WAGER WEEDEN, ON HORSEBACK.

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FIGURE 2  
WAGER WEEDEN MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN  
Source: Brown 1937:4



*The Weeden Memorial Fountain at Matunuck*

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### Significance

Willow Dell is significant as a well-preserved example of mid-eighteenth-century rural vernacular domestic design with significant Colonial Revival restoration and additions--both discussed in the single-family house context for South Kingstown (Adams 1994). It exhibits the typical characteristics of the rural colonial farmhouse, including a symmetrical, five-bay facade, central entrance with transom light, gambrel roof with cornice returns, and twelve-over-twelve double-hung sash. Though slightly modified the interior configuration follows the standard Rhode Island five-room, center-chimney plan. The 1945 restoration, at the hands of a talented revivalist architect, illustrates the growing appreciation for old houses in the mid-twentieth century and documents attitudes toward early houses as well as their late nineteenth-century additions and modifications. The property possesses integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The alteration of the farmhouse into a rambling summer estate illustrates the same change in the population of South Kingstown, from farmers to vacationing summer visitors. Once again the house is a year-round residence, with its rural colonial origins evident.

Single-family houses form the largest group of historic domestic buildings in Rhode Island. Examples of this house type, dating from 1676 to circa 1945, exist in all of Rhode Island's cities and towns. Single-family houses in South Kingstown are scattered in various areas of the town.

Colonel Jeremiah Bowen built the house at Willow Dell, also known as the Weeden Farm, in 1752 for his daughter. Wager Weeden purchased the farmhouse and 600 acres in 1826; the property passed through his younger daughter Polly Weeden Smith to her son, Nathaniel W. Smith, Jr, the late husband of the current owner.

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### Major Bibliographical References

Adams, Virginia H. "Rhode Island Single-Family Houses National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Nomination," The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc. Submitted to Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Providence, 1994.

Brown, Arthur W. Rhode Island's Tercentenary Miscellanies, Vol. 1. Providence, RI: The Wm. R. Brown Printing Company, 1937.

Nebiker, Walter. Historic and Architectural Resources of South Kingstown, Rhode Island: A Preliminary Report. Providence, RI: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1984.

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Historic Building Data Sheet, 1974.

Smith, Jr., Mrs. Nathaniel W. Personal interview, 1995.

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### Geographical Data

#### Verbal Boundary Description:

The nominated property boundaries are defined as South Kingstown Assessor's Plat 80:2, Lot 1.

#### Boundary Justification:

The boundaries conform to the present lot associated with the property, encompassing the house and the accompanying outbuildings and agricultural fields.