

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 24 1979

DATE ENTERED

2 1979

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
-- TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Whitehall Mansion

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

Conn. Route 27

— NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Stonington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Second--Christopher J. Dodd

STATE

Connecticut

— VICINITY OF

CODE

09

COUNTY

New London

CODE

011

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

**PRESENT USE**

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Stonington Historical Society

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 103

CITY, TOWN

Stonington

STATE

Connecticut

— VICINITY OF

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Stonington Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER

Elm Street (P.O. Box 191)

CITY, TOWN

Stonington

STATE

Connecticut

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

State Register of Historic Places

DATE

1978

— FEDERAL  STATE — COUNTY — LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE

Connecticut

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE <u>1962</u>

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Whitehall Mansion is a two-and-one-half-story, gambrel-roofed Colonial dwelling with a central chimney. It is located in a semi-rural area in the town of Stonington, approximately one mile south of the village of Old Mystic. The house is set back approximately 500 feet from Connecticut Route 27, which it faces on the west side. The Connecticut Turnpike lies immediately to the south, and the Mystic River flows a short distance west of Route 27. The surrounding terrain is mainly flat forest and swamp land, although there are new commercial developments in the general vicinity along Route 27, particularly to the south of the Turnpike.

A construction date in the late Colonial period is apparent at once with its gambrel roof with triple attic lights and vaguely classical detailing. As near as can be ascertained, the house was built between 1771 and 1775<sup>1</sup>. The doorway is the highlight of the facade, and is flanked by bold, fluted pilasters supporting a heavy entablature. The door itself is composed of four panels (two horizontal at the top and bottom and two vertical in between) and hung on long strap hinges. There are no side or top lights.

The outside covering is cedar shingle showing about 14 inches to the weather (reportedly 36 inches in overall length) fastened with rose-headed nails. Window sash is 12-over-12 on the main floors and 9-over-6 in the attic story. A similarly-styled modern caretaker's wing, a one-and-one-half-story gambrel-roofed addition perpendicular to the rear of the house, was constructed in 1966. The exterior is painted a dull red, which paint scrapings indicated was the first color to have been applied<sup>2</sup>. There is a raised terrace of squared granite blocks extending approximately 20 feet beyond the front of the house, an original feature that was moved along with the building from its previous location.

The construction of the house is somewhat unusual in several respects. The chimney from the first floor up is entirely of brick rather than the more commonly used stone, and the outside walls are nogged with brick (note: this was a local building tradition to be seen in several other houses in Stonington). Ceiling height is 9 feet on the first floor and 8 feet on the second. Summer beams running parallel with the end walls are in evidence under plaster ceilings in the front rooms.

The hall or north front room is presently furnished as a dining room and measures approximately 16 feet square. There is a fireplace set in a paneled wall which is 4 feet wide with rounded brick corners and a brick hearth. Above it is a mantel shelf and a raised panel 2 feet by 4 feet

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<sup>1</sup> Whitehall and its Restoration, p. 14

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 16

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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made from a single piece of pine. To the right of it is a built-in cupboard. The entire room is paneled below the chair rail, and there is classical wood moulding where the walls join the ceiling.

The parlor (south front room) is similar to the hall except for its fireplace wall. It is also paneled, but above its mantel shelf the raised panel is flanked by two fluted pilasters that match those on the front doorway. The fireplace contains a glazed brown tile hearth.

The kitchen occupies the central portion of the back half of the house. Its dimensions are 17 feet wide by 15 feet long. The fireplace is 7 feet wide with a side bake oven and a one-piece granite hearthstone. There are three storage cabinets in the wood-sheathed wall above; the remainder of the room is sheathed with horizontal boards beneath the chair rail. A back staircase occupies the southeast corner.

There is a "borning room" at the northeast corner of the house. It measures approximately 10 feet by 15 feet and is furnished as a bedroom with a reproduced stenciled floor design. At the southeast corner is another small room that serves as a modern kitchen.

The main staircase is a 3-turn left-hand stair with turned balusters and scroll-shaped brackets beneath the treads. There is paneling below it, and the space underneath is used as a closet. An unusual feature is the "gun cabinet", an enclosure about 3 feet wide and 4 feet high built into the chimney wall at the top.

The floor plan of the second floor parallels that of the floor below. The hall chamber has a chimney wall wainscoted similar to the rest of the house with a single 3½ by 5-foot panel above the fireplace. The parlor chamber has two horizontal panels above the fireplace opening and, like the hall chamber, has a raised brown tile hearth.

The small rooms located above the "borning room" and the modern kitchen serve as a Historical Society library and office respectively. The kitchen chamber contains a fireplace of which the hearth is supported by a "trimmer arch" of segmented brick construction visible in the room below (it was removed intact when the chimney was dismantled during relocation). About two-thirds of the chimney wall is panelled, and there is a chair rail around the rest of the room. A sizable cupboard is situated to the right of the fireplace.

The attic is of barn-like proportions and contains a plaster-finished

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room at the northeast corner. There is additional loft space above the main floor which is reached by a ladder.

Today the entire house is appropriately furnished as a gentleman's home of the last quarter of the 18th century and serves as the museum and headquarters of the Stonington Historical Society.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
—PREHISTORIC	—ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	—COMMUNITY PLANNING	—LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	—RELIGION	
—1400-1499	—ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	—CONSERVATION	—LAW	—SCIENCE	
—1500-1599	—AGRICULTURE	—ECONOMICS	—LITERATURE	—SCULPTURE	
—1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	—EDUCATION	—MILITARY	—SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	—ART	—ENGINEERING	—MUSIC	—THEATER	
—1800-1899	—COMMERCE	—EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	—PHILOSOPHY	—TRANSPORTATION	
—1900-	—COMMUNICATIONS	—INDUSTRY	—POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	—OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		—INVENTION			

## Criteria A and C

SPECIFIC DATES 1771-5

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Whitehall Mansion is an unusually impressive example of late Colonial architecture, one of the finest now standing in Stonington, a town rich in early buildings<sup>1</sup>. Its style of architecture is indicative of the prosperity achieved in Eastern Connecticut in the immediate pre-Revolutionary period and the growing influence of European (and more particularly English) taste on indigenous domestic building. Whitehall was built by Dr. Dudley Woodbridge, a prominent local physician who represented the adjacent town of Groton in the Connecticut colonial legislature for several terms between 1735 and 1762.

The name "Whitehall" had been applied to the farm the house was later built on as early as the late 17th century, when it was owned by Thomas Parks. As the booklet Whitehall and its Restoration explains it,

Research tells us that Thomas Parks' forebears in England owned a home in Gestingthorpe, England, called Whight House. When Thomas acquired Reverend Blinman's acerage he may have applied the name to the property and, transformed to Whitehall, it prevailed over the years, finally becoming applied to the house rather than the land.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Woodbridge graduated from Harvard in the Class of 1724 with a degree in Theology. He did serve as a minister to the Groton church for two years, but after his marriage in 1739 he left the ministry and became a physician. His success in that profession is evidenced by the elaborateness of the house he later built for himself.

Dr. Woodbridge had lived most of his life in an unpretentious house on the Groton side of the Mystic River in the area of Old Mystic, not moving to the Stonington side until late in life. The surrounding neighborhood had originally been settled by four families in 1651, and was noted for its temperate marine climate and flat, relatively stone-free ground.

The house was located on the opposite side of Route 27 and faced east with its back to the river. This was directly opposite its present align-

<sup>1</sup>Based on conversation with Capt. Robert J. Ramsbotham, U.S.N. (Ret.), President, Stonington Historical Society, 24 Sept. 1978.

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Whitehall and its Restoration. Compiled by Stonington Historical Society, 1970.  
 Haynes, William. Stonington Chronology, 1949.  
 Wheeler, Richard Anson. History of the Town of Stonington, 1903.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 3.5

QUADRANGLE NAME Old Mystic

QUADRANGLE SCALE 7.5 minute

UTM REFERENCES

A 19 25 28 30 610  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 C  
 E  
 G

B  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 D  
 F  
 H

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Bounded on the North by land now or formerly of Chemical Bank & Trust Co.; East by land now or formerly of Paul M. Keach; South and West by State of Connecticut Highway Department.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Charles W. Brilvitch National Register Consultant  
 ORGANIZATION DATE  
Connecticut Historical Commission September 1978  
 STREET & NUMBER TELEPHONE  
59 South Prospect Street 203-566-3005  
 CITY OR TOWN STATE  
Hartford Connecticut

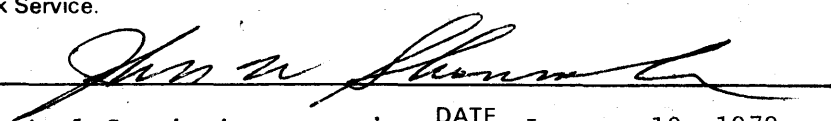
# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL \_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_ LOCAL x

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE



TITLE Director, Connecticut Historical Commission

DATE January 19, 1979

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
 ATTEST: Bill Lalovich  
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 4-12-79

DATE April 9, 1979

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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ment, which explains why the hall, "borning room", and attic chamber, usually the rooms with the greatest exposure to sunlight, are located to the left of the front door and now face the north.

The house passed through several ownerships after Dr. Woodbridge's death in 1790, and in 1962 was the property of Florence Bentley Keach. In that year it was decided that the route of the new Connecticut Turnpike would pass directly through the site of Whitehall, and that demolition was imminent. Rather than see this occur Mrs. Keach donated the house and a piece of land across the road for a new site to the Stonington Historical Society.

Restoration work commenced in 1962 and was completed in 1969. The chimney was demolished, but the remainder of the structure above the basement was moved intact. Whitehall and its Restoration describes some of the work done:

Special problems were overcome: chimney, fireplaces and hearths were photographed and dismantled before moving. The unique "trimmer arch" of the main fireplace was carefully preserved...These and other major and minor obstacles were surmounted and the building re-located on a foundation constructed from the original materials where possible but reoriented to face west towards the present highway. And the stone-bordered terrace became part of the new location.

...We here emphasize that the phase of the restoration relating to the interior decorating was carried out in an unusually authentic manner. We point especially to the upper rooms as being believed to be identical in design and color scheme to that which existed in the latter days of Dr. Woodbridge's life.

Today the house suffers from its situation several hundred feet back from the road rather than a more appropriate modest setback of 25 to 50 feet. The fireplaces and portion of the chimney visible from the attic have visibly been rebuilt of used brick and also compromise the integrity of the structure. It derives its significance, then, from surviving original detail and the bulk of the structure itself, which never underwent major renovation over the span of the last two centuries.

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