

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name
other names/site number Willington Common Historic District

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet.
city, town Willington
state Connecticut code CT county Tolland code 013 zip code 06279

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private, public-local, public-State, public-Federal
Category of Property: building(s), district, site, structure, object
Number of Resources within Property: Contributing (30, 1, 1, 32), Noncontributing (0 buildings, 0 sites, 0 structures, 0 objects, 0 Total)

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A
Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.
Signature of certifying official John W. Shanahan, State Historic Preservation Officer Date 11/8/90

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.
determined eligible for the National Register.
determined not eligible for the National Register.
removed from the National Register.
other, (explain:)
Entered in the National Register
Signature of the Keeper
Date of Action

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling/secondary structure  
RELIGION/religious structure  
AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding  
LANDSCAPE/common; GOVERNMENT/town hall

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/single dwelling/secondary structure  
RELIGION/religious structure/vacant  
AGRICULTURE/agricultural outbuilding  
LANDSCAPE/common; SOCIAL/meeting hall

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

COLONIAL/Postmedieval English  
EARLY REPUBLIC/Federal  
MID-19TH CENTURY/Greek Revival/Gothic Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation granite  
walls weatherboard  
roof asphalt  
other \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Willington Common Historic District is a small residential community on Route 74 (formerly Route 44) in Willington Hill. The majority of the district's resources surround Willington Common, which is bounded on the south by Route 74, on the north by Common Road, and on the east by Jared Sparks Road (Photograph #1). Route 74, locally known as the Tolland Turnpike, is a major thoroughfare between Ashford and Tolland.

The district contains 32 contributing resources which date from 1738 to 1938. They include 14 houses and their associated outbuildings, two churches, a town meeting house, one store (now a residence), the Willington Town Common, and a monument on the common. Two-thirds of the principal buildings predate 1850. All the buildings are of wood-frame construction, generally set on granite foundations.

The basic layout of the area has remained essentially unchanged since about 1800. Common land set aside by the town in 1757 and 1762 included acreage on both sides of the Tolland Turnpike. The northern section is the present Town Common. Land on the south side of the road remained undeveloped until 1797 when the town granted permission for a store at the southeastern end. By 1809 the rest of the southern section was divided and sold for building lots. Common Road, a dirt road for most of the nineteenth century, was accepted as a town highway in 1925 in an effort to halt encroachment by automobiles and wagons across the common. More recently, with the construction of Route 84 to the west, Route 74 has been widened to accommodate an increase in through traffic.

The Willington Town Common, a roughly triangular open grassed area of about two acres, is the focus of the district (Inventory #31; Photograph #1). It is bordered by mature trees along Common Road, its northern border. Three institutional buildings face the common: two on the north, the Congregational Church and the former Town Hall, and the Baptist Meeting House on the south, now the Federated Church of Willington and the only one of the three still in use in its original capacity. The Congregational Church and the Old Town Hall were both built in 1876 (Inventory #s 5, 4; Photograph #s 1, 2). Despite their date of construction, they both are typical eighteenth-century types. The church, now vacant, functioned as the town hall from 1926 to 1974. It is a simple Gothic Revival-style building with a small bell tower. Except for its pointed-arched windows and steep roof, it would appear to be an eighteenth-century meetinghouse of the third style. The bell was removed during World War II and mounted outside at the front of the church. The old Town Hall is a gable-roofed building that resembles a typical earlier one-room New England schoolhouse, with its gable end facing the street and doorways at either side.

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Location

Common Road: 1, 5, 7, and Map 23: Lots 21, 22.

Jared Sparks Road: 4.

Tolland Turnpike: 227, Map 23: Lot 59, 232, Map 23; Lot 53, 238, 242, 243, 244, 245,  
247, 248, 251, 253, Map 23: Lot 23 (Town Common).

Property Owners' List (as of 2/1/90)

<u>Inv. #</u>	<u>Street Address (Map/Lot)</u>	<u>Owner(s)</u>	<u>Mailing Address (if different)</u>
1.	1 Common Road (23/16)	Edward B. & Martha E. Williams	
2.	5 Common Road (23/17)	Ernest R. Kline	
3.	7 Common Road (23/20)	Willington Baptist Society	
4.	--Common Road (23/21)	Town of Willington	Old Farms Road, Willington, CT 06279
5.	--Common Road (23/22)	same as above	
6.	4 Jared Sparks Rd. (23/26)	Alice H. Cassells	
7.	227 Tolland Turnpike (23/15)	Hilal E. & Phyllis A. Cokash	
8.	-- Tolland Turnpike (23/59)	same as above	
9.	232 Tolland Turnpike (23/58)	Mary F. Dean & Curtis L. Hoffman	
10.	" " "	same as above	
11.	" " "	same as above	
12.	-- Tolland Turnpike (23/53)	Federated Churches of Willington	
13.	238 Tolland Turnpike (23/52)	Michael L. & Dona W. McKee	
14.	" " "	same as above	

\* Map/lot numbers, street addresses and mailing addresses were taken from the Town of Willington Tax Assessor's records on 2/1/90.

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15.	"	"	"	same as above	
16.	242 Tolland Turnpike (23/51)			Douglas L. & Dana Tellier	
17.	"	"	"	same as above	
18.	"	"	"	same as above	
19.	243 Tolland Turnpike (23/29A)			Rosario & Denise V. Ferreri	
20.	244 Tolland Turnpike (23/50)			Barry Glassner & Betsy Amster	
21.	"	"	"	same as above	
22.	245 Tolland Turnpike (23/29)			Gary C. & Rhonda J. Dort	
23.	"	"	"	same as above	
24.	247 Tolland Turnpike (23/30)			Patricia & Elfriede E. Samson	P.O. Box 215 Mansfield Depot CT 06251
25.	"	"	"	same as above	
26.	"	"	"	same as above	
27.	248 Tolland Tpke. (23/32,33)			Evelyn Parizek	125 Tolland Tpke. Willington, CT 06279
28.	"	"	"	same as above	
29.	251 Tolland Turnpike (23/31)			Stanley Skorupski	23 Cosgrove Road Willington, CT 06279
30.	253 Tolland Turnpike (22/02)			Georgianna Booth	
31.	-- Tolland Turnpike (23/23) and Common Road			Town of Willington	Old Farms Road Willington, CT 06279
32.	"	"	"	same as above	

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The Baptist Meetinghouse is more typical of its style and period (Inventory #12; Photograph #3). It was built in 1829 by a local carpenter/builder, Albert Sharp, in a transitional Federal/Greek Revival style. Its clapboarded facade has a projecting pavilion with two entrances flanking a two-story round-arched window. Four pilasters are surmounted by a wide entablature and the flushboarded pediment of the pavilion. Round-arched windows are repeated on the side elevations and the belfry, which is topped by an octagonal drum and a small dome.

Three of the houses facing the common were built in the eighteenth century, all in the Cape style, the predominate residential building form in the district. The Old Manse, built in 1738, is a five-bay, one- and-one-half story Cape with an unusual combination roof form (Inventory #6; Photograph #4). The rear slope has only one pitch, while the front slope has the double pitch of the gambrel type with three shed-roofed dormers that appear original. Another more traditional Cape is the Rice-Merrick House (Inventory #20; Photograph #5). The windows of its five-bay facade are placed well below the eaves and flank a simple door surround with a five-pane transom. Alterations to the Minor Grant Store tend to obscure its original Cape form (Inventory #16; Photograph #5). It is typical of eighteenth-century commercial buildings with its broad gable end with larger windows facing the street. Long shed-roof dormers and a decorative porch with spindle work across part of the east elevation were added in the late nineteenth century, probably when it was converted to a residence.

Three of the six houses constructed between 1810 and 1830 have an eighteenth-century Cape form: the Daniel Glazier House, the Silas Glazier House, and the Jonathan Weston House (Inventory #s 7, 9, 2). The Daniel Glazier House, believed to have been built about 1810, retains several eighteenth-century features, including the three small windows in the gable surrounding the main second-floor window (Photograph #6). The barn historically associated with this house, which stands on the opposite side of the Tolland Turnpike, appears to have been built in the mid-nineteenth century (Inventory #8; Photograph #7).

Of the three other houses from this period, two are individual examples of style or form. The Hiram-Rider House was built in 1820 in the Federal style with a ridge-to-street orientation and is more elaborately detailed than its period counterparts (Inventory #13; Photograph #8). The five-bay facade displays flared lintels above the first-floor windows and an Italianate door hood. The cornices of the main block and the end pediments are decorated with dentils and mutules, separated by an unusual molding with a repeating pattern of small round holes. The Federal-period Daniel Glazier Tavern,

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built about 1815, is the only hipped-roof building in the district (Inventory #1; Photograph #6). Its use of a central chimney and simple door and window surrounds is more typical of the eighteenth century. The last Federal-period house is the Baptist Church Parsonage, built in the same transitional Federal/Greek Revival style as the Baptist Meetinghouse (Inventory #3; Photograph #s 1, 9).

Only two nineteenth-century residences were constructed after 1830: a circa 1850 Cape-style house and the Greek Revival-style Deacon Turner House. The latter has a fully pedimented flushboarded gable supported by pilasters, frieze, and entablature (Inventory #19; Photograph #10). The entrance portico features fluted columns capped by Ionic capitals, and frames a transomed doorway with sidelights.

Four twentieth-century houses, all built prior to 1930, complete the district: a Bungalow which has an enclosed porch, and three simple two- and one-half-story vernacular farmhouses. The gable-to-street plan farmhouse at 248 Tolland Turnpike is representative of this latter type, and includes a related nineteenth-century barn (Inventory #s 27, 28; Photograph #11).

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## INVENTORY OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

Inv. #	Address	Name/Style/Date	C/NC	Photo. #
1.	1 Common Road	DANIEL GLAZIER TAVERN Federal, 1815; incorporates smaller 1762 house	C	6
2.	5 Common Road	JONATHAN WESTON HOUSE Cape, 1821; addition, 1897	C	9
3.	7 Common Road	OLD BAPTIST PARSONAGE Federal/Greek Revival, 1830	C	1, 2
4.	—Common Road	OLD TOWN HALL Late-19th-c. vern., 1876	C C	1, 2
5.	—Common Road	OLD CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH Gothic Revival, 1876	C	1, 2
6.	4 Jared Sparks Road	THE OLD MANSE Gambrel Cape, 1738	C	4
7.	227 Tolland Turnpike	DANIEL GLAZIER HOUSE Cape, c. 1810	C	6
8.	227 Tolland Turnpike	Daniel Glazier Barn	C	7
9.	232 Tolland Turnpike	SILAS GLAZIER HOUSE Federal Cape, 1816	C	
10.	232 Tolland Turnpike	Barn associated with #9 c. 1880	C	
11.	232 Tolland Turnpike	Shed associated with #9 c. 1900	C	
12.	—Tolland Turnpike	BAPTIST MEETINGHOUSE Federal, 1829	C	3
13.	238 Tolland Turnpike	HIRAM-RIDER HOUSE Federal, c. 1820	C	8
14.	238 Tolland Turnpike	19th c. shed associated with # 13	C	

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15.	238 Tolland Turnpike	20th c. shed associated with #13	C	
16.	242 Tolland Turnpike	MINER GRANT STORE Cape, 1797	C	5
17.	242 Tolland Turnpike	Garage associated with #16, 1930	C	
18.	242 Tolland Turnpike	19th-c. shed associated with #17	C	
19.	243 Tolland Turnpike	DEACON TURNER HOUSE Greek Revival, 1849	C	10
20.	244 Tolland Turnpike	RICE-MERRICK HOUSE Cape, c. 1770/1771	C	5
21.	244 Tolland Turnpike	Garage associated with #20 c. 1930	C	
22.	245 Tolland Turnpike	20th-c. Bungalow, 1926	C	
23.	245 Tolland Turnpike	Late 19th c. barn/garage associated with #22	C	
24.	247 Tolland Turnpike	Early-20th c. domestic, 1900	C	
25.	247 Tolland Turnpike	20th-c. barn associated with #24	C	
26.	247 Tolland Turnpike	20th-c. barn associated with #24	C	
27.	248 Tolland Turnpike	Early 20th-c. domestic, 1900	C	11
28.	248 Tolland Turnpike	Early 20th-c. barn/garage associated with #27	C	11
29.	251 Tolland Turnpike	Early 20th-c. domestic, 1900	C	
30.	253 Tolland Turnpike	Cape, c. 1850	C	
31.	---Tolland Turnpike & Common Road	TOWN COMMON Early-18th c. common	C	1
32.	---Tolland Turnpike &	War Memorial, 1921	C	



**8. Statement of Significance**

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

nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1738 - 1938  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Albert Sharp (Builder)  
\_\_\_\_\_

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

The Willington Common Historic District is architecturally significant as a small, cohesive, well-preserved rural town center whose development is illustrated from 1738 to 1938. The historical and architectural integrity of the district is exceptional; all of the vernacular residential, agricultural, commercial, and institutional buildings contribute to its historic character. They were built around the original eighteenth-century common in the Colonial, Federal, Greek Revival, and Gothic Revival styles.

Historical Background

The Willington Common Historic District, which comprises the original town center established in Willington in 1727, has continued to serve in that capacity to the present day. Because of the dispersed settlement pattern of Willington, no other villages in town ever grew large enough to become separate church societies, so Willington Hill remained the primary institutional/commercial center for the town. It was 12 years after settlement before the society built its first meetinghouse, the first of three buildings near the present site. The first town hall was built facing south over the common in 1876, the same year that the present Congregational Church was constructed (Inventory #s 4, 5) The church became the second town hall in 1926 (Inventory #5). By the time the Baptist Meetinghouse (Inventory #12) was built on the south side of the common in 1829, the Tolland Turnpike was laid out and the small residential community at Willington Hill was well established. In the late nineteenth century, the roadway extending to the north from east end of the Common was named for Jared Sparks (1789-1866), a locally-born historian best known for editing George Washington's personal papers for publication. Willington continued to develop as a rural village center through the early twentieth century and remained the civic center of the town until 1974. In that year the town offices were relocated from the former Congregational Church to a converted factory building on Old Farms Road southeast of the center.

Architectural Significance

The Willington Town Common with its surrounding rich variety of institutional and residential buildings establishes the district's distinct character as a rural crossroads village. The common's irregular shape and sloping lawn are typical of New England's

See continuation sheet

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Chronology of Willington, Connecticut, 1727-1917: the First 200 Years. History Committee of the Willington Historical Society, 1977.

Demers, Ronald F. Modernization in a New England Town: A History of Willington, Connecticut. Willington Historical Society, 1983.

"Report of the Willington Historic District Study Committee for the Proposed Historic District at Willington Common." Town of Willington, 1981.

### 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

See continuation sheet

### 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 19

### UTM References

A            
Zone Easting Northing

C

B            
Zone Easting Northing

D

See continuation sheet

### Verbal Boundary Description

See attached district map drawn to scale from the Willington Tax Assessor's Maps #23 and #22 for district boundaries.

See continuation sheet

### Boundary Justification

Taking the Willington Common as the focus of the district, the boundaries were drawn to encompass the maximum number of historic resources located in the vicinity of the common during the period of significance of the district. Beyond the district the character of the area changes: to the west, north, and east is either open land or modern residences; to the south there is open land.

See continuation sheet

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jan Cunningham, National Register Consultant, Reviewed by John Herzan, National  
organization Cunningham Associates Ltd. date 5/2/90 Register Coordinator  
street & number 37 Orange Road telephone (203) 347 4072  
city or town Middletown state CT zip code 06457

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early town centers. The town common has remained as the focal point of the area, much as it was in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Customarily, townspeople in that period used this type of communally-owned land for village musters, as a voting place, and often as the location the meetinghouse, school, or graveyard. Cattle were often grazed or impounded there. Unlike many commons which were landscaped as Victorian greens in the Victorian period, the Willington Common is virtually unchanged since 1800. The pattern of the roads around the common which has remained the same for almost two centuries, along with the dry-laid stone walls that border some of the properties, maintain the historic rural ambience of the village. The houses with their associated barns and outbuildings, and the institutional buildings are all well-preserved and display most of their original forms and types of material.

The institutional buildings are vernacular classics of their type: simple wood-frame structures influenced by the architectural trends of their periods. The Baptist Meetinghouse, which became the Federated Church of Willington in the 1920s, exhibits fine Federal form and treatment, yet is austere and sparing in its use of Federal or Greek Revival detail (Inventory #12). In like manner, the Congregational Church expresses the Gothic Revival style only through its steeply-pitched roof and pointed arch windows (Inventory #5). The Old Town Hall, built in the same period, is even plainer and more functional, characteristics of institutional architecture before 1850 (Inventory #4).

Several distinguished examples of Colonial-period architecture are located around the common. Both the Old Manse and the Rice-Merrick House are superior examples of the Cape style; each has exceptional exterior integrity (Inventory #6, 20). The Minor Grant Store is a rare survival of an eighteenth-century commercial building which has retained its essential form and orientation (Inventory #16).

The Hiram-Rider House and the Deacon Turner House are excellent well-preserved rural interpretations of domestic Federal and Greek Revival architecture (Inventory #s 13, 19). Both display an exceptional degree of architectural detail for rural farmhouses and add architectural interest to the more typical rural streetscape.

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UTMs:

USGS Coventry & Stafford Quads

A	18	726830	4639480
B	18	727040	3639420
C	18	727030	4639400
D	18	727280	4639270
E	18	727250	4639200
F	18	727110	4639190
G	18	726750	4639380

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List of Photographs

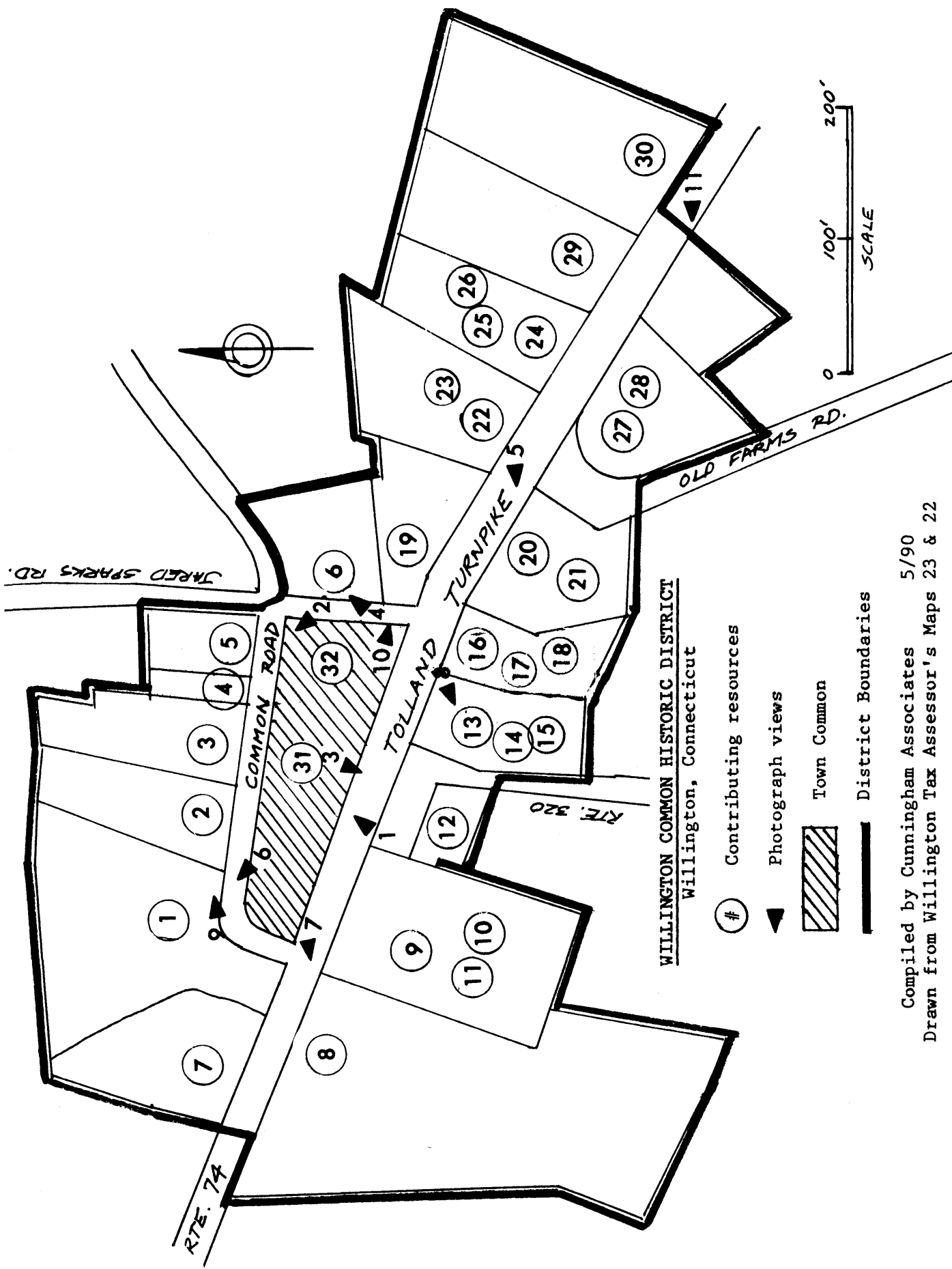
Property: Willington Common Historic District, Willington, Connecticut

Photographer: Cunningham Associates Ltd.

Date: 2/90

Negatives on file: Connecticut Historical Commission

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Town Common<br>Facing:N  | 2. Congregational Church, Old Town<br>Hall, Baptist Parsonage<br>Facing: NW |
| 3. Baptist Meeting House<br>Facing: SW                            | 4. Old Manse<br>Facing: NE  |
| 5. Rice-Merrick House<br>Facing:W                                 | 6. Daniel Glazier House<br>Daniel Glazier Tavern<br>Facing: W               |
| 7. Daniel Glazier Barn<br>Facing: SW                              | 8. Hiram-Rider House<br>Facing: SW  |
| 9. Jonathan Weston House<br>Baptist Parsonage (1-r)<br>Facing: NE | 10. Deacon Turner House<br>Facing:E   |
| 11. 248 Tolland Turnpike<br>Facing: SE                            |   |



WILLINGTON COMMON HISTORIC DISTRICT  
 Willington, Connecticut

- ⊕ Contributing resources
- ▲ Photograph views
- ▨ Town Common
- ▬ District Boundaries

Note: Inventory numbers indicate approximate location of resource.