

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



1. Name of Property

historic name: Angell-Ballou House

other name/site number:

2. Location

street & number: 49 Ridge Road

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Smithfield

vicinity: N/A

state: RI county: Providence code: 007 zip code: 02917

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

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

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Property name Angell-Ballou House, Smithfield, Providence County, RI

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 14 Jan 2004

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

 other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date
of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: DOMESTIC

Sub: single dwelling

Current: DOMESTIC

Sub: single dwelling

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7. Description

Architectural Classification: Federal

Other Description:

Materials: foundation STONE roof ASPHALT
 walls WOOD/clapboard 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: statewide

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions):

Areas of Significance: Architecture

Period(s) of Significance: c. 1800

Significant Dates: c. 1800

Significant Person(s):

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Unknown (may be Jonathan Angell)

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

X See continuation sheet.

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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: 4.33 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
	A	<u>19</u>	<u>292480</u>	<u>4640930</u>	B	
	C	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	D	

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

The property nominated includes all of Town of Smithfield Tax Assessor's Plat 45, lot 127.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

This single parcel is all that remains of the land historically associated with the Angell-Ballou House. The farm fields which once surrounded the house have all been sold off; much of the land has been built upon.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Stephen and Loreen Holland, owners, and Steven Tyson, consultant
Organization: _____ Date: 2003

Street & Number: 49 Ridge Road Telephone: _____

City or Town: Smithfield State: RI ZIP: 02917

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Description

The Angell-Ballou House (c. 1800) is a well-preserved 2½-story Federal farmhouse. It faces east and is located in a semi-rural setting on Ridge Road in Smithfield, Rhode Island. The house has a center hall plan; there is a rear kitchen ell. The house is located on a narrow road and is fronted by a wooden picket fence, granite walkways, and large maples. Dry-laid stone walls mark the boundaries of the 4-acre lot, which declines in grade at the rear of the house; a 2-car garage is located just north of the house.

The main block of the house is 36 feet wide by 28 feet deep, with a flank-gable roof and a dentil cornice. The façade of the house is 5 bays wide with a center entrance. Two end chimneys (on the north and south sides) are set forward of the ridgeline and well inset from the end wall planes. They provide fireboxes for the two front rooms on both first and second floor. The south gable end elevation is articulated into 4 bays, the north gable end elevation into 3. There is a secondary entrance on the south side and a door into the kitchen ell as well. The walls are clapboarded. All (except one) of the windows have original plank frames with later (but old) six-over-six sash. One original twelve-over-twelve sash remains on the west wall. The windows, the side entrance, and the ell entrance have splayed lintels.

The pilastered doorway is the principal decorative feature of the house. The semicircular fanlight has five large lights separated by metal muntins with foliate ornament at the tips, radiating from a rosette and a smaller semicircle. The window is set in a wood frame with a keystone. The doorway still has the original eight-panel, raised-panel door and old hardware. It is surrounded by a series of moldings, including a beaded frame, beaded band molding, and an ovolo back band. The entablature is capped by a low-pitched gabled pediment with crown and modillion moldings.

The first floor plan has two front rooms which flank a central stairhall and three rooms across the back of the house, the center one the largest. There is a 12-by-12-foot, one-story, gable-roof kitchen ell set slightly off-center of the rear wall; this may be a later addition.

In the front hall, the single-run stair has a closed stringer with a continuous cyma and torus molding, acorn drops, turned newel posts, a molded banister, and closely spaced turned balusters. Three doors lead

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off the stairhall, to the two front rooms and the rear center room.

Each of the front rooms has a fireplace with Federal mantel. The mantels extend beyond the chimney mass on both sides by a sort of false front; the mantel shelf itself also extends about 8 inches beyond the width of the chimney mass. The overmantels are made up of classical moldings, though they are arranged somewhat oddly (pilasters do not appear under the entablatures they should appear to support, or extend only half-way under their entablatures). The northeast front room has a built-in wall cupboard, with wide single-leaf doors, again oddly proportioned and arranged (perhaps the result of cutting a full-size door to make the cabinet doors). The front rooms have 3-panel interior window shutters with original hardware. Both rooms have beaded, cased corner posts, eight-panel doors (with HL hinges), and molded chair rails. The walls and ceilings are plastered. The floors are of narrow pine boards.

The three back rooms are reached through the front stairhall or through the secondary entrance on the south side. A small winding stair leads from the secondary entrance to the second floor and to the attic. The small room at the southwest corner is now a bathroom. All three of the back rooms have horizontal beaded wainscot, candlestick jamb casings, four-panel doors, and wide-plank floors.

The cooking fireplace was originally on the back wall of the center room. The fireplace and portions of the original chimney have been removed and replaced with a late-18th-century-style chimney breast with cupboards and shelves on each side. Recent restoration work has opened up this chimney and revealed that at least portions of the original fireplace surround remain behind the later work. The kitchen ell is fitted with cabinets and pantry shelving dating from the 1930s.

The second floor plan matches the first in room layout and dimension. The northeast room fireplace has a mantel with the same odd false-front arrangement as those on the first floor. The fireplace mantel in the southeast room is somewhat smaller and plainer than the others; it also has side cabinets. The second floor has plank floors, four-panel doors, and old hardware. The attic is finished plainly and divided into two rooms.

The foundation is stone rubble capped with granite slabs. Brick walls divide the basement, supporting the center transverse wall and the front entry walls above. In the northwest corner of the basement, there is a doorway and stone stairway to exit the basement at grade; this basement

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entrance is covered by a gable-roof shed. The condition of the foundation is sound, straight, and stable. The basement under the ell is not connected to the main basement. Its entrance is at grade on the west elevation. As part of a current restoration, the heating, electrical and plumbing systems have all been updated.

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Photographs

Photographer: Loreen D. Holland

Date: July 2003

Negatives on file at: RIHPHC

(The above information applies to all photographs)

Photo #1

View: East and south elevations, looking northwest.

Photo #2

View: Front entrance, east elevation, looking west.

Photo #3

View: West elevation, looking east.

Photo #4

View: Center hall stair, looking east.

Photo #5

View: Wall Cupboard, northeast parlor, first floor, looking west.

Photo #6

View: Mantel, northeast parlor, first floor, looking north.

Photo #7

View: Chimney breast/shelving, center room, first floor, looking west.

Photo #8

View: Southeast chamber, first floor, mantel, looking south.

Photo #9

View: Door, second floor, looking east.

Photo #10

View: Southeast parlor, second floor, looking south. m

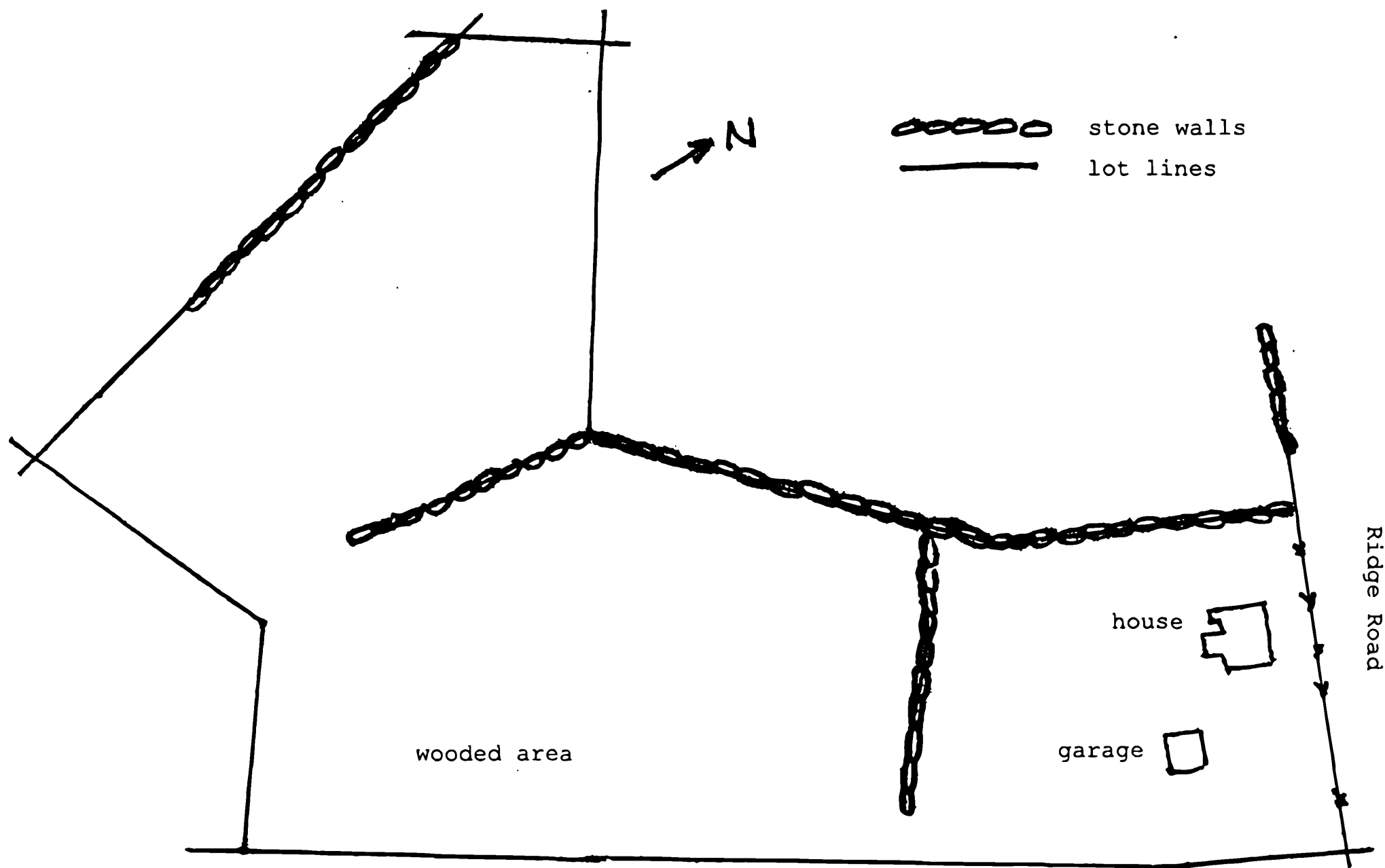
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Site Plan

Sketch - not to scale

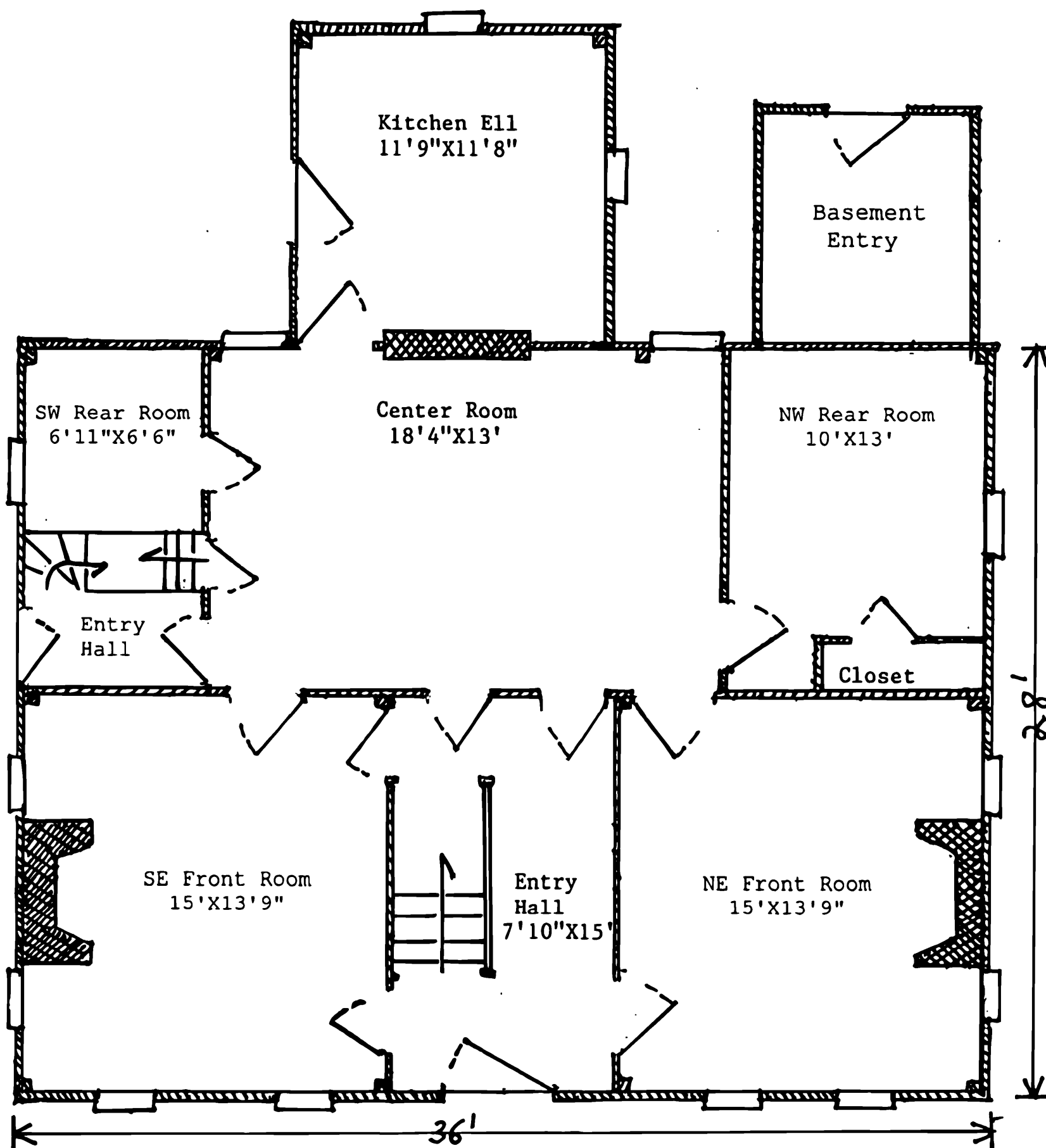
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Angell-Ballou House First Floor Plan Sketch – not to scale

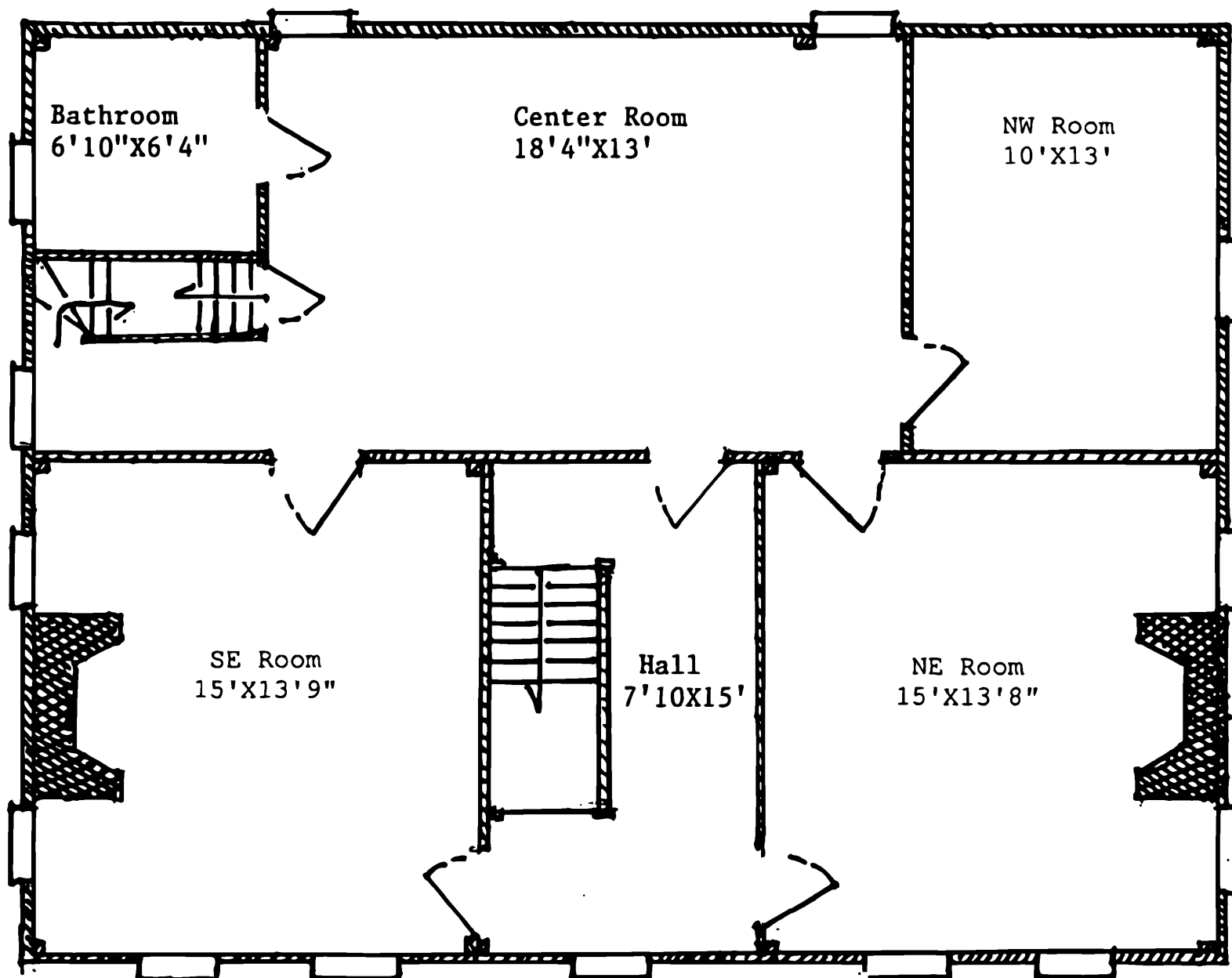
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Angell-Ballou House Second Floor Plan Sketch - not to scale

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Significance

The Angell-Ballou House is a good example of a Federal farmhouse, built for a prosperous family in rural northern Rhode Island. In its form it is typical of its place and era. In its design elements, it exhibits an architectural ambition which is more typical of urban than rural dwellings, combined with a naivete in its execution; the imbalance between ambition and execution has caught the attention of several architectural historians in the twentieth century. The house is relatively well preserved and is located in a suburbanizing but still countrified setting.

The Angell-Ballou House has a symmetrical, 5-bay center-entrance façade, and its plan is arranged around a wide central stair hall with chimneys on the exterior end walls, reflecting one of several variants which are typical of Rhode Island's Federal houses. The woodwork details of cornice, entrance, stair, and mantels suggest an owner or builder interested in the use of stylish classical details. For example, the pedimented doorway with its fanlight is a simplified version of the elaborate doors built in Providence, Bristol, and Warren during the period. The front stair has the closed string, the turned newel and balusters, and acorn drops found in some variations of the style. In the parlors, the mantels and wall cupboard are designed using the classical components of the style.

The elements of the Federal style, however, are arranged here in an unusual mode. The chimneys are placed in an odd fashion, both in their inset from the end wall planes and their orientation of the wider side toward the façade. The result on the interior is fireplaces which project well into the side rooms. The façade itself is arranged rather mechanically, the window lintels unrelated to the entrance surround. On the interior, the decorative work displays the same unusual features: pilasters do not sit under the entablatures they purport to carry, or, in the case of the mantels, are off-set from each other. Pediments are cut short of the pilasters which would ordinarily appear to support them. The extension of the mantels and fireplace surrounds beyond the edges of the chimney breast is odd, as are the eccentric proportions of the wall cupboard. Many of the same classical elements found in the urbane Federal houses of the period are used here--but they are used by an idiosyncratic and untutored hand. In all, the effect is a charming provincial version of the Federal style.

The complete history of changes to the Angell-Ballou House is not yet

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known. There is evidence of a cooking fireplace and chimney on the rear wall of the back center room, which has been removed. The kitchen ell may have been constructed when the chimney was removed, probably in the mid-19th century. For the most part, however, this is a well-preserved house. Much of the original finish material remains, including floors, plaster walls, doors, hardware, and woodwork (cornices, mantels, stairs, and paneling).

The Angell-Ballou House is part of a small collection of early houses in this section of Smithfield. Within a mile or two are several Federal and Greek Revival houses on Lime Rock Road, Douglas Pike, and Ridge Road. A number of these are associated with the Angells, a many-branched family who originally settled in Smithfield in the eighteenth century. The houses are set among open fields and laced through by narrow tree-lined country roads. It is likely that a National Register-eligible historic district exists here. For the present, only the Angell-Ballou House is nominated. Several of these houses were once at the centers of farmsteads, which included barns and other outbuildings; a few of these outbuildings remain at other houses, though many have been lost. There may also be important archeological evidence of Smithfield's agricultural period, but no testing has been done.

The Angell-Ballou House was built for Jonathan Angell (1757-1825), a farmer and wheelwright. Indeed, the house was probably built by Jonathan Angell as well. A nineteenth-century genealogist describes him as

a very ingenious mechanic. One of his aged neighbors who knew him well said to the author in 1855, that "he was a universal mechanic." He could build a good wagon or house and make all the tools he wanted to work with, being a good workman in iron and steel as well as wood. (Angell, p. 72)

Like most nineteenth-century residents of the area, Angell was also a farmer. Small subsistence and market/commercial farming was the norm in nineteenth-century Smithfield, even as the town's industrial villages grew up at water power sites. Angell's house was once the center of a moderate-size farm, about 80 acres. A barn and carriage house were located near the house. Today, there is only a modern garage.

The Angell family also had interests in several of the small manufacturing sites located along the streams in this part of Rhode Island. Jonathan Angell seems to have operated a wheelwright shop. When he left

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this house to his son Nathan (1795-1869), he also left him an interest in the Crookfall Brook Cotton Manufacturing Company. Nathan, like his father, was a mechanic as well as a farmer: he owned a nearby paper mill until 1856. He later built and operated a grist mill and saw mill as well.

Nathan Angell sold this house and its 80 acres in 1854 to Peter Ballou. The house was owned by members of the Ballou family into the twentieth century. In 1934 the house changed hands and became a rental property for several decades. A recent restoration has returned the house to single-family use and updated its mechanical systems.

The property is zoned residential by the Town of Smithfield.

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Downing, Antoinette F. *Early Homes of Rhode Island*. Richmond, Va., 1937.

Jenks, Grover L. *Dwellings in Northeastern Rhode Island and the Smithfields*. Monograph Series: Records of Early American Architecture, edited by Russell F. Whitehead and Frank Chouteau Brown, v. 21, no. 3., New York, 1935. Reprinted in Mullins, Lisa C. [ed.] *Early Architecture of Rhode Island: from material originally published as the White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs*. Architectural Treasures of Early America, 6. Harrisburg, Pa., 1987.

Jordy, William H. *Buildings of Rhode Island*. New York: Society of Architectural Historians and Oxford University Press, 2004.

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