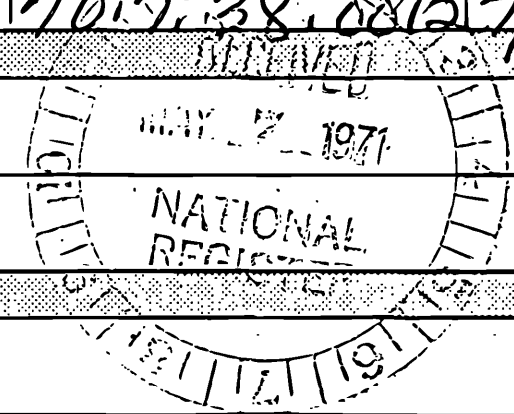


NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------------|
| STATE: Rhode Island | |
| COUNTY: Newport | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER: 70-7-38-0012 | DATE: 7/28/70 |



1. NAME

COMMON:
Fort Adams State Park

AND/OR HISTORIC:
 Fort Adams

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Harrison Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE: Rhode Island, 02840 CODE: 44 COUNTY: Newport CODE: 005

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|---|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both | Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered | <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate) | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Unused; later to be used as a park facility</u> |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

STREET AND NUMBER:
State House, 90 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island, 02903 CODE: 44

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:
Broadway

CITY OR TOWN: Newport STATE: Rhode Island CODE: 44

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1970 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:
Independence Avenue and 1st Street, S. E.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: District of Columbia CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

70-7-38-0012 7/28/70

7. DESCRIPTION

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|------------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One) | | | | | |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair | <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins | <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed |
| | (Check One) | | | (Check One) | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered | <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> Moved | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site | | |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

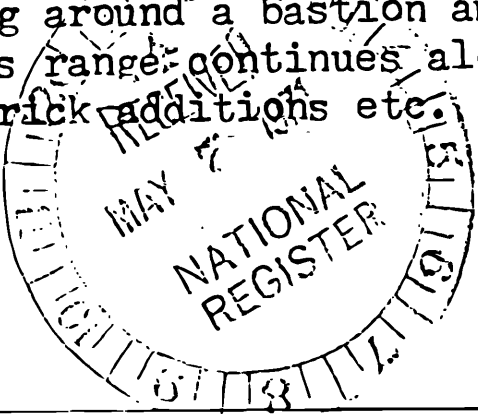
Fort Adams is situated on a north-easterly, thumb-like protuberance near the south-west end of Aquidneck Island; between it and the island of Jamestown runs the "east passage" into Newport harbour and Narragansett Bay. It received its name when certain fortifications on this site (which from earliest times had been employed for harbour defence) were completed and dedicated in 1799; it was named in honour of the second President of the United States. The 1799 fort was of robust brick construction set at "amazing" angles--no doubt following a polygonal or star-shaped Vauban example. By the time of the War of 1812 this work had already fallen into serious decay and was not considered useful thereafter.

The fort as we see it now is mainly a product of the 1820's, with some inner and outer additions. Soon after 1820 congressional appropriations were made for construction of a new Fort Adams, to follow the plans and specifications of Colonel Joseph G. Totten. In 1824 work was commenced with, first, demolition of the 1799 brick fort and, next, construction both above and below ground of the present rugged granite structure. Vastly larger than its predecessors, it is a hollow pentagon, about 1200 by 1000 feet over-all, with a narrow "base" facing-roughly--north, east and west sides splaying out towards the south, where the fourth and fifth sides form a point. At north-west, north-east and south-east angles are aggressively projecting bastions dominating the channel passage, Newport harbour and Brenton's Cove.

The high granite walls have two casemate levels within, with their embrasures (now largely bricked-up) for directing artillery fire seawards and with their necessary corridors and stairs. Above runs a barbette, or parapetted unroofed gallery, also for artillery use. A maze of underground tunnels was dug through rock, some leading to the water's edge to provide exits in case the fort should suffer abandonment. Many of these latter passages are to-day under water and others have been sealed off for safety; but a few parts of the underground works can still be inspected. To the south of the main pentagon, but following the outline of the "V" there, are lower fortifications, embanked within, intended for land defence. Extending from the fort's water-bordered areas and roadways are a number of wharfage and mooring facilities, one dating from the 1820's, when it was used to unload the granite brought from Maine for construction and hauled into place by wagon, rope and pulley.

Entrance to the fort is through a large, rusticated, segmental north portal originally protected by a moat. Within the massive walls, a one-storey range of granite runs along the east wall, projecting towards the parade-lawn and sweeping around a bastion angle with a surprisingly elegant convex curve. This range continues along the south side also, but there has surmounting brick additions etc. Construction is of dressed

(See Continuation Sheet)



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1824 ff.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Recreation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

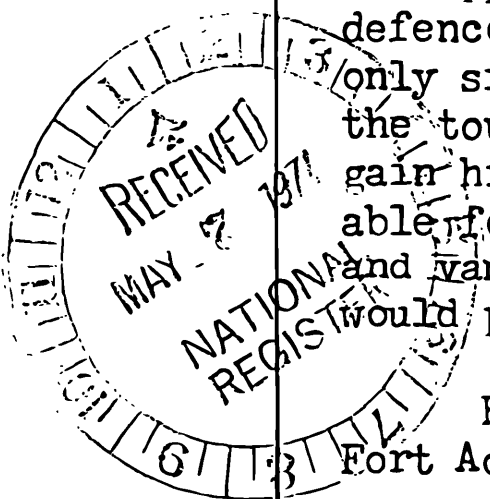
From Revolutionary War times onward the fort at Brenton Point has been not only a defence of Narragansett Bay, but a vital link in the east coast defence network. During the Civil War the fortification as we know it now played an important role in the continuing effectiveness of the Naval Academy. Throughout this period and up to the point at which the garrison was finally reduced, many officers of national distinction served there. The very fact that the fort was never called upon to perform its intended functions actively is testimony to its effectiveness. During the Spanish-American War there was a constant threat of Spanish landings in this area. That these never came about could possibly be related directly to the presence of Fort Adams. By World War II, Fort Adams, with its servant batteries, protected not only Narragansett Bay but the mouth of Long Island Sound as well.

Fort Adams is indeed an eloquent historical document--not only the only one of its kind in this state, but one of very few in the country--and it is unique in its potential for study of the entire scope of American coastal defence. It is second in size only to Fortress Monroe, and because that site is still an active army base it cannot compare with Fort Adams in terms of accessibility.

Parallel to its intended recreational purposes, Fort Adams affords the opportunity to become a comprehensive museum of American coastal defence and of day-to-day life in a major fortification. It would need only simple signs to indicate its original functions to the local and the touring public, which could use its open spaces for enjoyment and gain historical knowledge from its structures. Should funds be available for reinstating some interior spaces (mostly suffering from dirt and vandalism) a museum and instruction area could be established and would probably be heavily used by visitors.

However, unless attention, funds and re-use are soon directed on Fort Adams it will be another tragic case of "too late."

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| STATE Rhode Island | |
| COUNTY Newport | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER 10.7.38.11012 | DATE 7/28/70 |

(Number all entries)

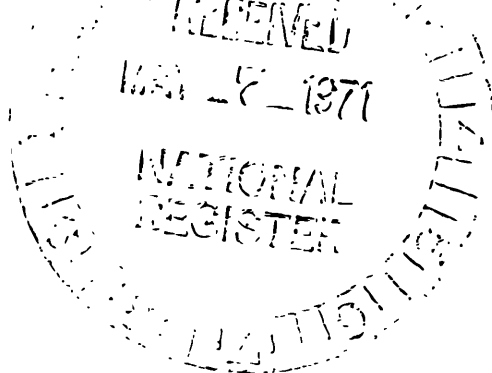
7. Description.

ashlar used in the simplest, most utilitarian, but handsome, manner. There is no applied ornament, no carving; yet recessed oblong panels let into the stonework over each opening give an understated adornment or at least a relief from monotony: this is surprising in its modest subtlety, somehow reminding one of Alexander Parris's work in this country and of the quieter sophistications of the English Regency style.

The southerly granite range mentioned above has for long served as basement to one floor of brick barracks prefaced by covered galleries supported on cast-iron columns at parade-ground-front and served by cast-iron stairs at rear, within the landward defences. The upper barracks structures and their chimnies survive, though mostly hollow through either fire or the collapse of roofs and floors. There are not other structures within the fort's walls.

A few other buildings of early date were placed outside the great walls, and of these the most interesting survivor is the old granite guard-house, in very austere Greek Revival style and most penitentiary in aspect. Outside the walls there are also more structures to east and north; these are brick auxiliary buildings, shed-like in form, constructed in the late XIX and early XX Centuries, but they bear witness to the long-continuing use and development of the fort. To the south of the landward fortifications were erected the commander's residence (1873) and housing for officers and their families. This entire southern area stretching from the fort proper to Harrison Avenue is now a naval housing development and is not included in the state-owned park.

The fort and its masonry (with the exception of the fire-damaged barracks) is in sound condition and intact in form.



Fort Adams State Park,
Newport, Rhode Island.

As it is required that the boundaries or extremities of a nominated property be defined by a rectangle, this last-mentioned form has unavoidably included the naval housing development which is not a part of Fort Adams State Park and is not included in its stated acreage.

The actual L-shape of the state's park property is shown in green on the accompanying Rhode Island Highway Map. This property includes the important fortifications and wharfage at the north as well as the necessary access road from Harrison Avenue and Newport itself, together with a strip of land to the east of that road upon which are minor adjunctory (and perhaps desirably useable) buildings of the fort and additional wharfage, moorings. It had not been thought that the access strip and its surviving structures should be excluded from the nomination of Fort Adams State Park as a whole, especially since a supply road from the city must always have been necessary and existing.

If the National Register still does not wish to accept for its listing all of the acreage of the state park, the nomination may of course be returned once more and the necessary map revisions etc. will be made.

R. B. Harrington.

