

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0682.756

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RECEIVED AUG 22 1978
DATE ENTERED DEC 19 1978

**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 Jonathan Warner House

AND/OR COMMON Warner-Brooks House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 47 King's Highway

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Chester

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE Ct.

VICINITY OF CODE

COUNTY Middlesex

CODE 007

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Malcolm G. Brooks

STREET & NUMBER 47 King's Highway

CITY, TOWN Chester

STATE Ct.

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Town Clerk's Office, Chester, Ct.

STREET & NUMBER Main Street

CITY, TOWN Chester

STATE Ct.

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Ct. Historical Commission Survey

DATE 1965-67

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Ct. Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN Hartford

STATE Ct.

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The house built by Jonathan Warner in 1798 is remarkably the same in appearance today as it was when he supervised its construction. It consists of two stories and a full attic over a raised basement of granite. The clapboards are graduated in width decreasing to about two inches at the sill. The front door with fanlight and side lights is framed by fluted pilasters which support a pediment with pulvinated frieze and dentil molding. The Palladian window above the door has plain pilasters and prominent wooden keystones. The entablature above is brought forward to form a central pavillion and is supported by two free standing Ionic columns on brownstone pedestals. Three steps leading to the doorway are of the same brownstone. The cornice is decorated by modillions above a carved fret. The dentil molding above the front door is repeated above the windows on the first floor. The four corners of the house have fluted Doric piers or posts on wooden pedestals. The louvered blinds are a later addition.

Windows, entrance, and entire facade are illustrated by J. Frederick Kelly in The Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, facing pages 80, 92, 120, 190.¹ An open porch on the east side of the house was added about 1924 by the present owner who took great pains to match the stone work of the foundation and had the carving beneath the cornice repeated. The wing which now contains the kitchen was added at an undetermined date in the nineteenth century on the site of an earlier leanto. The original dimensions of the house as set forth in a letter of January 1, 1798, from Jonathan Warner to Abisha Woodward, a well known builder in New London, inviting him to "undertake the Joiner work" were "42 by 33 and 19 feet post with a leanto on the back 9 feet wide open in the middle and a small room at each end 8 feet post and will be framed so as to come under the Chamber windows."² This would account for the fact that there is only one window in the rear of the house on the first floor. The well is located in the open area between what would have been the two sections.

The first floor has a center hall or passage way with open newel ramped stairs of pine. A square-topped newel post ends the bracketed stair rail which has square balusters placed so the corners are toward the newel post, perhaps for greater strength. The profile of the hand-rail is reflected in pine wainscote along the opposite wall. One wall of the hallway was removed to open it to the west parlor. A wide complex

¹ S. Frederick Kelly, The Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, New York, 1963.

² Jonathan Warner to Abisha Woodward, January 1, 1798, manuscript in the possession of Malcolm G. Brooks.

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bolection molding is found in the hall and throughout the house. All doors have fielded panels.

The two front rooms have a low sub-base rail and the corner posts have an ovalo on the inner corner. Mantels in all the rooms are different. In the east front room there are Doric pilasters below, but not above, the mantel shelf. The landscape panel above the mantel is richly molded, broken by a small raised panel which is repeated below. The mantel shelf is supported by bold uncarved moldings of the entablature above the pilasters. The mantel of the front west chamber has Doric pilasters above and below the mantel shelf. The landscape panel is more simply molded and does not have the center raised panel.

A short passage along the outer wall of the chimney connects the front and rear chambers on both floors. The large room at the end of the stair hall was the original kitchen and the large fireplace has a simple mantel and no overpanel. There is a stairway beside the fireplace which leads to the second floor and to the attic. A stone in the rear wall of the fireplace was removable to allow ashes to be swept into the cellar, from which they could be removed. The rear East room is the only room with a mantel which extends into the room. There are pilasters above and below the boldly molded mantel shelf.

On the second floor, the two front bedrooms have fireplaces with less ornate mantels and overmantels each with kneed architrave and cushioned frieze framing the fireplace and repeated on the panels above.

A modern bathroom has been added at the rear of the second floor.

The full attic has two windows at the east and west end, a loft above and a skylight. The cellar has a fireplace and smoke chamber. Throughout the house the hardware is original, as are the twelve over twelve windows. The lower sash of the windows on the first floor have weights with grooves in the window frames.

In the letter to Abisha Woodward quoted above, Jonathan Warner mentions what might have been his model "The uprite part is the same Bigness as Mr. Miller's and calculated so except a small alteration in the Chamber Stairs which I think may save work and be more convenient."³

Warner built a great Federal country house which is completely documented: names of workmen, suppliers, materials, etc. are preserved in letter, bills and inventories which were given to the present owner. The total cost of building was L 1616-11-1d, approximately \$5,388.00 The house was built when Jonathan was 70, and he enjoyed it for only a few years. It remained in the Warner family until 1922 when it was purchased by Malcolm Brooks who has preserved both building, documents, and surrounding orchards and gardens so that it remains a unique example of the country house of the affluent merchant farmer of the time.

³ Perhaps this is Jeremiah Miller, a New London merchant.

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A nineteenth century carriage house was moved from across the Middlesex turnpike to the rear of the house where it serves as a garage. Other structures, such as the craft house erected near the ferry for weaving and spinning, and two other houses and barns, no longer exist.

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for the course it was to take when building began in 1802.

When he built his house he used local workmen and timber. Glass and paint were brought from New York, wallpaper from Hartford, and stone and hardware were brought from Haddam, Chatham, New London, New York, and East Haddam. Bills and letters documenting these purchases have been carefully preserved and are significant in reflecting costs of the time. The existence of a manuscript collection relating to this well preserved architectural masterpiece makes the building particularly significant in the interpretation of state and local history.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

Local history

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The house which Jonathan Warner left so completely documented is important as an example of how the wealthy merchant-farmer of the area lived. The period in which he built his house was a time when handsome buildings were constructed in the area. Gideon Leete, Warner's partner in the merchant vessel, Matilda, planned a house which was completed in 1796 (the Leete-Ely house in Chester), and his neighbor and friend, Epaphroditus Champion, built his mansion on the Upper Landing in East Haddam in 1794. The house also suggests the richness of town houses in nearby New London if indeed it was modelled on that of New London merchant Jeremiah Miller. Few of these great houses have survived and there are none in the lower Connecticut River Valley with so much of the original setting preserved.

Jonathan Warner was first of all a farmer. He was born in what is now Chester in 1728, and lived his entire life in Chester and Lyme. He inherited land which had been purchased by his grandfather, Andrew Warner, in 1697. He bought all the property inherited by his brothers and sisters, establishing an estate of over 100 acres in the midst of which he built his great house. He owned land on both sides of the river and established a ferry between Chester and Hadlyme in 1769. He worked closely with Gov. Trumbull and the Commissary of Provisions for Connecticut during the Revolution, in transporting supplies to the troops.

The land was farmed to supply the family; the inventory of livestock included cows for milk and cheese, calves, pigs, sheep, turkeys and geese and working oxen. He probably used some of his own produce in the trade with the Caribbean, as did many merchant farmers. Although there are only 28 of the original acres today, the house stands in the same position in the midst of its orchards and fields as it did in 1798.

In addition to farming, Warner was engaged in a successful shipping business, both coastwise and to the Caribbean. He was a partner in the ventures of the brig Matilda until she was seized by the French in 1799. The ferry he established in 1769 remained in the family until mid-nineteenth century. Still in operation, it is the second oldest in Connecticut and is owned by the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

Warner was an important member of his community, serving as constable and then justice of the peace, in which capacity he probably heard cases in his parlor. He served on the school committee for many years and helped to raise money for a new school in 1801. Before that, he served on the committee to plan the building of a new church (1793), now the Old Town Hall of Chester, (National Register of Historic Places). He was a director of the Middlesex Turnpike and was largely responsible

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Original deed and documents relating to the building in possession of the owner.

Orton-Jones, Gwendolen and Harry, Jonathan Warner, A Man of Parts, fall, 1977, published by the Chester Historical Society.

Kelly, J. Frederick, Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, 1924. (see continuation sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 28 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A

 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B

 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The parcel of land described in a deed in the land records of the Town of Chester, Volume 16, page 441.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Connecticut		Middlesex	
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Barbara S. Delaney, Trustee, Chester Historical Society

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Chester Historical Society

July, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

5 Gorham Road

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Chester

CT.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

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

John S. ...
 SHPO

TITLE

DATE

Aug. 16, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 12-19-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *Anna ...*

DATE 12/15/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Chester, Conn.

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The Warner-Brooks House is located on an estate which represents only a portion of the original holdings. However, the 22 acres around the house preserves the country house environment which is unique in Connecticut for houses of this period and elegance. The barn which now serves as a garage is the only one of the original buildings of the farm. The garden is situated in what was the original barnyard. The orchards are still maintained but the land is no longer farmed and there is no livestock.

The estate was a self sufficient working farm. Oxen, a horse, cows, calves, heifers, pigs, sheep were included in the livestock. There were flocks of turkeys and geese. Milk was made into cheese, and wool was used for spinning and weaving. For this purpose, a Craft House was built near the Ferry House. Neither now exists.

The importance of the present acreage is vital to the setting of a gentleman-farmer's estate and it preserves for Chester and the lower valley a picture of life on the estate of a well-to-do merchant farmer of the period. The house is a country house and at least this much of its "country" remains intact.

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von Miklos, Josephine, Good Fences Make Good Neighbors, 1972.
The Houses and History of Chester, 1976, Chester Historical Society.
Interview with Dr. George Tatum, Yale University, July, 1977.

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Data

Jonathan Warner House
Warner-Brooks House
Chester, Middlesex County, Connecticut

UTM References:

A	18/714	115/4588	135
B	18/714	060/4588	110
C	18/714	070/4588	000
D	18/713	950/4587	980 940
E	18/713	970/4587	795
F	18/713	980/4587	980 680
G	18/713	710/4587	900
H	18/713	640/4588	060
I	18/713	695/4588	070
J	18/713	690/4588	100
K	18/714	100/4588	175