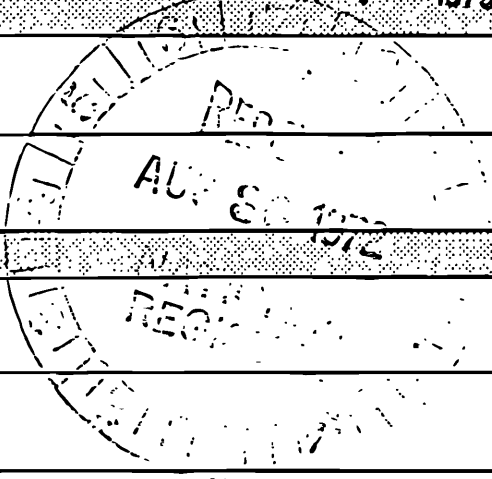


NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	MAR 7 1973



1. NAME

COMMON:  
Friends Meeting House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
North Road and Weeden Lane

CITY OR TOWN:  
Jamestown

STATE Rhode Island, 02835	CODE 114	COUNTY: Newport	CODE 005
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure 	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Society of Friends, care of Mr. William Wharton Smith, Elder

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Hull's Cove

CITY OR TOWN:  
Jamestown

STATE: Rhode Island, 02835	CODE 114
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Town Clerk

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Town Hall, 71 Narragansett Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:  
Jamestown

STATE: Rhode Island, 02835	CODE 114
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1958  
 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
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

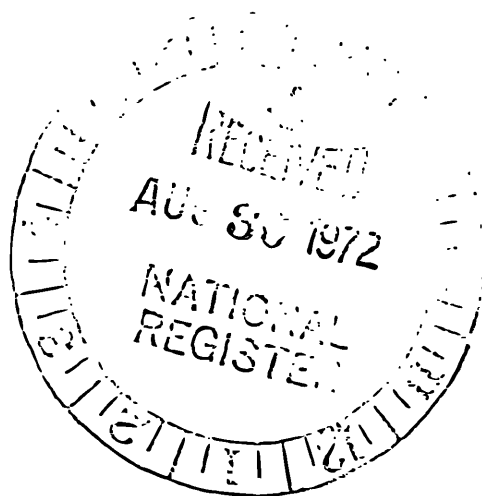
CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Jamestown Friends Meeting House, which dates from about 1786, is a severely plain one-story timber-framed gable-roofed structure set on a low fieldstone foundation. It is covered with cedar shingles which are set off by the white-painted trim, which is limited to corner-, eaves- and sill-boards and the simply-framed window and door openings. In accordance with Quaker practice there are two entries-- in this building they are on the south (long) front--one for men and one for women. These doorways contain four-panel doors in board enframements with the plainest of angular (not moulded) cappings. There are two windows on the south elevation, one to the right of each entry, and they are set so high that the eaves-board running across them serves as the upper part of their enframements; windows of similarly high placement are on the east and west ends of the building, and all have six-over-six sash. The two windows of the north elevation are smaller, since they are placed above the raised interior seating on that side of the building. There is another very small window in the peak of the east gable, and a stone chimney is also located at this end of the building. All windows have single-leaf, battened exterior shutters.

The one room of the interior has plain plastered ceiling and walls and a wide-board floor. This room can be divided to separate the men's and women's meetings by means of two hinged, wide-board partitions which, when raised, fasten to the ceiling by wrought-iron hooks. The pews have seats and back-rails formed of plain wide boards attached to pew-ends that are cut to an S-shape at the top. Those of the west meeting-space are arranged in rows facing north; those in the east space are arranged at right angles, facing north and east, around the stove that heats the room. A raised bench--the rising seat typical of Friends meeting houses--runs the length of the north wall.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

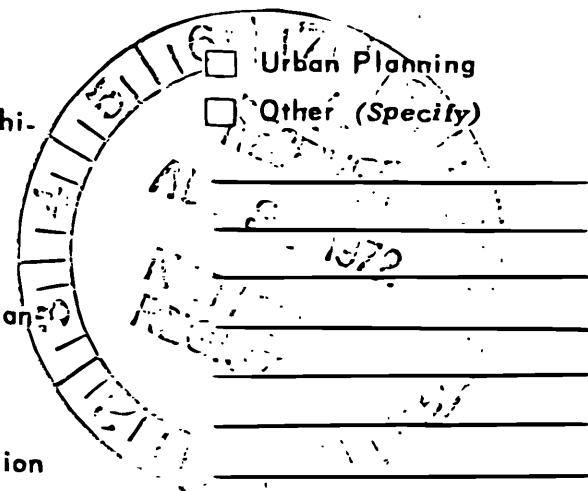
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) C. 1786

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <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 type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                 | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |   | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |   | _____                                    |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This small structure, truly handsome in its simplicity, exemplifies the intentionally plain, durable, well-thought-out, yet sensibly commodious, character of the building works of the Quakers in their early settlements in America. Though rather late in date, it is particularly valuable in Rhode Island as a surviving, unchanged, small meeting house of this sect, which arrived in the colony c. 1657 and was first largely centred on Aquidneck (Newport) and then Conanicut (Jamestown) Islands, from which it spread.

While the old Friends Meeting House in Newport is still extant, it was built on a much larger scale to accommodate the needs of the yearly meeting of New England Friends held in Newport from the late XVII Century until the 1890's or later. By 1875 that building had been more than tripled in size and its original character totally concealed (it is now the subject of study that will explain and reveal its architectural development). The less pretentious and more typical meeting houses in Portsmouth and Lincoln have been altered, and other notable ones--in Providence, East Greenwich, Oaklawn, Cumberland and elsewhere in the state--have disappeared altogether.

The Society of Friends itself has also largely disappeared here--though it was once an important religious body and counted many persons prominent in local history and government among its adherents. However, the island of Jamestown still has a (very diminished) Quaker congregation; so its meeting house is one of long, continued use, though now it is generally opened only in summer, when there is the annual return of a long-standing summer colony from Philadelphia, that stronghold of Quakerism, who may attend services in the building, and when tourists are drawn to inspection of the old structure.

As in all Quaker (and later, Shaker) architecture, purposeful simplicity and firmness of construction, an unadorned clothing of the building, are conspicuous. There is an economy of trim which indeed is nearly an absence of trim. There is evidence of careful thought

(See Continuation Sheet.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

U. S. Works Progress Administration. Federal Writers' Project: Rhode Island. A Guide ... (Boston, Massachusetts, 1937), p. 431.  
 Watson, W. L.: History of Jamestown (Providence, Rhode Island, 1949), pp. 73-74.

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 UTM part  
 12-11-75  
 W

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		41° 30' 51.48" N	71° 22' 30.44" W	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE: B. Christopher Bene, Surveyor-Researcher  
Richard B. Harrington, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission DATE: Dec. 31, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: State House, 90 Smith Street

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

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Thomas C. Williamson

Title State Liaison Officer

Date August 22, 1972

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert H. Utley  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 3/7/73

ATTEST:  
W. J. Neuley  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 3-2-73

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
MAR 7 1973	

(Number all entries)

8. Significance.

in respect to the use and arrangement of interior space (viz.: the swing-down partitions to separate the men's and women's meetings, and the concomitant separate but compatible seating plans), the placement of doors and windows--the latter high, lest outdoor visions disturb pious concentration--and thoughtful, not ungenerous, provision for comfort of seat and sight while the congregation participates directly in the Quaker rites.

The building has deservedly been well cared for ~~for~~ a long time; but for close to two hundred years it has really stood up on its own, because of the plain common sense, economy of design and structural firmness which were combined in its planning and erection. It was intended to be serviceable, and it still serves its original purpose.

In a somewhat remote and picturesque site, this little building has become a landmark and an attraction to visitors on Jamestown. It is also, however small and simple, a monument to Quaker philosophy and principles and to the honesty and excellence upon which they insisted in the products of their hands.

