

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received OCT 3 1984  
date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Ashton Historic District

and/or common

2. Location

Roxbury  
street & number Portions of Mendon, Scott, and Old Angell Roads;  
Store Hill Road; Front and Middle Streets. not for publication

city, town Cumberland N.A. vicinity of congressional district 1 - Rep. Fernand J. St Germain  
state Rhode Island code 44 county Providence code 007

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Multiple ownership

street & number

city, town \_\_\_\_\_ vicinity of \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Town Clerk, Cumberland Town Hall

street & number 45 Broad Street

city, town Cumberland state Rhode Island 02864

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title See Continuation Sheet #1. has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date See Continuation Sheet #1.  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

city, town Providence state Rhode Island 02903

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## 7. Description

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<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Ashton Historic District, now part of a growing suburban area between the urban centers of Providence-Pawtucket and Woonsocket, is an old rural waystop and manufacturing village in the Blackstone River Valley, located on an important transportation corridor through the hinterlands of northeastern Rhode Island. Mendon Road (State Route 122), a winding highway running parallel to the Blackstone on the uplands east of the river, forms the spine of the district and has served as a major regional travel route since colonial times, augmented in later periods by the nearby Blackstone Canal and the Providence & Worcester Railroad (constructed in 1828 and 1847, respectively). A steep ridge divides the village into two subsections: one on the high ground above the river and one on the flood plain below. This geographic separation is reinforced by differences in building materials and settlement patterns, with the upper village characterized by wooden structures arranged in a linear fashion along Mendon and Scott Roads, the lower village, by two-and-one-half rows of brick dwellings arranged on a grid of streets near the brick factory. A visual link between the two sections is afforded by a row of three brick double houses along Mendon Road near the road to the lower village. The village contains primarily residential structures, among them single- and two-family dwellings and multi-unit tenements, and also includes a large factory, a former schoolhouse, a church, a parish hall, two historical cemeteries, and two or three commercial buildings, almost all dating from the nineteenth century.

The district is clearly delineated by natural and man-made features: a curve in Mendon Road around a rock outcropping to the south, the Blackstone River to the west, a modern interstate highway and a fast-food stand to the north, and a twentieth-century suburban residential tract to the southeast. The chief intrusion within the district is the present intersection of Angell Road (State Route 116, eastbound) with Mendon Road. The construction of this section of Angell Road, designed to bypass a narrow, crooked stretch of the original highway now called Old Angell Road, necessitated the demolition of two or three nineteenth-century structures, leaving a gap in the eastern streetscape of Mendon Road. Very few other structures appear to have been demolished, and new construction has been limited to four suburban dwellings of conservative design on Scott Road and a contemporary metal-clad fire station near the southwest corner of Mendon Road and George Washington Highway (State Route 116, westbound).

(See Continuation Sheet # 2 ).

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Preliminary Survey Report, Town of Cumberland  
March 1977.

Archeological Assessment Survey and Phase I and II Historical  
and Cultural Resource Survey... Improvements to Routes 116  
and 146, Lincoln, R.I. January 1980.

Phase I Cultural Resources Reconnaissance Survey for Reconstruction  
of Mendon Road, Route 122, Cumberland, R.I. July 1981.

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INVENTORY

Contributing structures include nineteenth-century buildings erected during the village's period of development as a manufacturing center and service center for residents of the settlement and nearby farms, together with early twentieth-century structures which reflect a continuance of the nineteenth-century architectural tradition and the ongoing industrial prosperity of the village. Most of the buildings are vernacular structures which cannot be readily classified according to conventional stylistic terminology. Although a number of these structures have been resheathed with modern wall-cover materials, they have been defined as contributing structures since they could be restored to their original appearance. Many of the altered structures retain original trim, elements such as window and door frames, corner boards, cornices, etc. Where such elements have been obliterated, it has been noted in the entry. In general, buildings erected after 1930 have been defined as non-contributing since they differ markedly in character from the earlier structures. Unless otherwise noted, buildings are of wood-frame construction.

Discrepancies between various nineteenth-century maps and between historical and contemporary maps make it difficult to document all buildings in the district. The names associated with the buildings are those of the earliest known owner, taken from old maps and assigned only in cases in which the attribution can be made with reasonable certainty. Construction dates have been determined primarily through stylistic analysis and map research. Properties without street numbers have been assigned numbers, which have been placed in parentheses.

Most of the brick company-built operatives' housing can be classified into two basic types. These are described hereafter as Type A and Type B and are referred to as such in the inventory below.

Type A: A tall 1½-story, flank-gable-roof brick double house with a 4-bay facade, paired central entrances with transoms, punched door and window openings with segmental-arch tops, small attic windows under the front and rear eaves, and exposed rafters forming eaves brackets.

Type B: A tall 2½-story, flank-gable-roof brick tenement with a 6-bay facade, paired end-bay entrances with transoms, punched door and window openings with segmental-arch tops, small attic windows under the front and rear eaves, and exposed rafters forming eaves brackets.

Many of these buildings have undergone minor alterations, such as the addition of aluminum awnings or wrought-iron stoop railings, or the installation of glass blocks or solid panels in door transoms. However,

(See Continuation Sheet # 3).

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the overall visual unity of these structures is so strong, no attempt has been made to catalog such changes in the inventory. All of the extant company-built housing is relatively intact with the single exception of one vacant, dilapidated structure on Middle Street, noted below.

CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES:

FRONT STREET

- 9-10 Lonsdale Company Double House (1867): Type A dwelling.
- 11-12 Lonsdale Company Double House (1867): Type A dwelling.
- 13-14 Lonsdale Company Double House (1867): Type A dwelling.
- 15-16 Lonsdale Company Double House (1867): Type A dwelling.
- 17-18 Lonsdale Company Double House (1867): Type A dwelling.
- 31-32 Lonsdale Company Tenement (1867): Type B dwelling.
- 33-34 Lonsdale Company Tenement (1867): Type B dwelling.
- 35-36 Lonsdale Company Tenement (1867): Type B dwelling.
- 37-38 Lonsdale Company Tenement (1867): Type B dwelling.

Ashton Mill (1867): The main block of this handsome brick factory is a rectangular structure measuring 348 by 90 feet, originally 3½ stories with a mansard roof, now 4 stories with a flat roof. Its focal point is a 5-story, pyramidal-roof tower projecting from the center of the facade. The first four stories of the tower, with corner-pier and recessed-panel wall articulation, support a belfry with triple arched openings on each side and a heavy bracketed cornice. Continuous granite belts around the block and tower form string courses and sills for the segmental-arch windows, which have now been bricked up. Original ancillary structures include a 1½-story, mansard-roof brick office building to the southeast of the main block and a 1-, 2-, and 3-story, flat-roof, brick power house to the northwest on the bank of the Blackstone River. Both are now linked to the main block by a complex amalgam of 1- and 2-story, early 20th-century brick additions with pier-and-panel walls and flat roofs. The mill was constructed by the Lonsdale Company to expand its operation at Ashton, replacing an earlier mill on the other side of the Blackstone in Lincoln. Originally powered both by water and by steam engine, it produced cotton textiles. The Ashton Mill was the site of the first large-scale test of the Sawyer spindle, one of the earliest high-speed spindles developed in the United States. Textile production continued

(See Continuation Sheet #4 ).

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Front Street (cont)

here until 1935, when the Lonsdale Company shut down the mill. The factory was purchased in 1941 by the Owens-Corning Company and became one of the earliest, if not the first, plant in New England to manufacture glass fibers.

MENDON ROAD

- 1349-1357 John Barnes Block (1870s): An unusual long, rectangular 2½-story structure set close to the road, with three distinct subsections of slightly varied height. The shortest portion, at the south, has a flaring mansard roof with gabled dormers, while the center and northern portions, each increasingly taller, have flank gable roofs. The building is sheathed with modern vertical-board siding on the first story and clapboards on the upper stories. It was probably used originally for both residential and commercial purposes. In the 1890s it was owned by John Barnes, an English immigrant who came to Ashton in 1869 to work for the Lonsdale Company and subsequently went into business himself as a grocer and dry-goods retailer.
  
- 1370-1372 House (ca 1898): A small 1½-story, flank-gable-roof, clapboard-sheathed dwelling with a pair of entrances under a turned-post porch at the southern end of the facade and a central front gable breaking up through the eaves.
  
- 1378-1380, 1394-1396, 1408 Lonsdale Company Double House (ca 1867): Three handsome and well preserved 2½-story, flank-gable-roof brick dwellings with 4-bay facades containing paired, transom-topped entrances in the center bays, and brackets trimming the eaves. Windows and doors are set in simple punched openings with granite sills and lintels. These structures differ somewhat in character from the rest of the company-built worker's housing and were probably reserved for employees in supervisory positions. Number 1378-1380 has a modern 1-story aluminum-sided ell at the southwest corner; the other two structures have rear ells contemporary with the original construction.
  
- 1393 Parker Heating Company Building (late 19th century, altered mid-20th century): A 2½-story, flank-gable-roof structure with a pent roof across the front formed by an extension of the roof of a 1½-story side ell. It is covered with clapboards and vertically grooved plywood panels, and modern overhead garage doors have been installed in the first-floor facade. It may have originally been a barn or stable.
  
- 1403-1407 John M. Ryan Block (1875): A large 2½-story, mansard-roof structure with commercial space on the first floor and apartments above, now sheathed with asphalt and asbestos shingles.

(1408 See #1378-1380 above)

(See Continuation Sheet # 5 ).

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Mendon Road (cont)

Modern aluminum-frame windows and doors have been installed in the storefronts but the original fascia and molded cornice above them, with paired brackets at the ends and flanking a central doorway, are intact. Other original features are the second-story window architraves with molded caps and central rosettes in the lintels and a heavy modillion-trimmed eaves cornice. This structure was built for John M. Ryan, an Irish immigrant who came to Rhode Island about 1850 and opened a dry-goods and grocery store in Lonsdale in 1862. Ryan became a major local property owner and community leader. He served on the Cumberland Town Council and as trustee of the Ashton School District and of Saint Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, and donated the land on which Saint Joseph's was constructed just south of the village.

(1509) Saint John's Episcopal Church Parish House (ca 1860, 1907): A rambling 1½-story, clapboard-sheathed structure covered by a variety of gable, hip, and flat roofs. It has a large-scale gabled hood on brackets over the front door and a hood on brackets over a side door. A portion of the present structure was built by the Lonsdale Company as a chapel for Episcopal services, reflecting the paternalistic attitude of the mill owners. Extensive additions were made in 1907 and the enlarged building has since been used as a parish hall.

(1510) Saint John's Episcopal Church (1868): A tall 1½-story, clapboard-sheathed, plain Carpenter Gothic structure with a steeply pitched end-gable roof, a projecting end-gable vestibule, a small circular window above the vestibule in the peak of the main gable, and Gothic-arch front door and side windows. The parish was established in 1857. The Lonsdale Company had previously built a chapel for the congregation on the east side of Mendon Road (see entry above for Saint John's Parish House). The mill owners erected the present church after construction of the new brick mill in 1867.

1512 District 14 School House, now Cumberland School Administration Building (ca 1868): A 2½-story, end-gable-roof brick structure painted white, with a 4-bay facade, a side-hall entrance, a circular window in the front gable, and an ell at the northwest corner. A modern flat-roof portico with wrought-iron supports has been added over the front entrance. A school has stood on this site since the 1830s. The present structure, similar to schoolhouses erected in other Lonsdale company villages in the early 1870s, was probably built by the mill owners shortly after the construction of the brick factory and village, to accommodate the new increase in population.

(See Continuation Sheet # 6 ).

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Mendon Road (cont)

- 1529-1531 Mrs. Cunningham Double House (ca 1870): A 2½-story, flank-gable-roof dwelling with paired central entrances and a 2-story Tuscan-columned front veranda probably added in the early 20th century. It is now sheathed with asphalt shingles.
- 1537-1539 Tenement (late 19th century): A large 3-story, flank-gable-roof, multi-family dwelling with entrances on the sides, similar to 4 Scott Road. It is now sheathed with aluminum siding and all original trim has been covered or removed.
- 1541-1543 Structure (late 19th century): An unusual 2½-story, flank-gable-roof, clapboard-sheathed structure with an asymmetrical facade containing a large barn-door opening, now blocked up, and an off-center entrance with a hood on jigsaw braces. It has a deep bracketed cornice across the facade between stories and bracketed eaves. It was apparently used originally for both business and residential purposes.
- 1547 C. Greene House (ca 1860s): A standard 1½-story, end-gable-roof, clapboard-sheathed, side-hall-plan dwelling with a 3-bay facade and a door hood on massive brackets.
- (1549) House (late 19th century): A tall 2½-story, flank-gable-roof dwelling set well back from the street, with an irregular 4-bay facade, a side-hall entrance, and a rear ell. It is now sheathed with aluminum siding and all original trim has been covered or removed.
- 1555-1559 House (ca 1890s): A 2½-story, end-gable-roof two-decker with a side-hall entrance under a modern gable-roof entrance porch and a side shed dormer breaking up through the eaves. Some modern windows have been installed, including a bow window on the first-floor facade, and the exterior has been resurfaced with aluminum siding, completely obliterating all original trim. The building now contains an office and apartments.
- 1565-1567 J. Thomas House (ca 1870): A handsome, tall 2½-story, flank-gable-roof, clapboard-sheathed dwelling with a 5-bay facade, a central entrance under a hood on massive brackets, a front bay window to one side of the entrance, and a 1-story side entrance porch.
- 1570 House (ca 1850): A 1½-story, flank-gable-roof, clapboard-sheathed Greek Revival dwelling with a 3-bay facade, a central entrance, corner pilasters, entablature trim at the eaves, a long side ell, and an asymmetrical veranda extending across part of the facade and down one side, connecting to a recessed porch in the side ell.

(See Continuation Sheet #7 ).



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Mendon Road (cont)

- 1571 House (ca 1898): A 2½-story, flank-gable-roof dwelling with a 3-bay facade, a central entrance, double windows on the facade, and a front veranda with turned posts and brackets. It stands behind a picket fence and is now sheathed with aluminum siding which covers the window frames and corner boards.
- 1575 House (1890s): A 1½-story, end-gable-roof, Queen Anne vernacular dwelling with a 2-bay facade; a side-hall entrance; a front veranda with turned posts, post brackets, and eaves brackets; clapboard-sheathed walls; shingled gable ends; bargeboards with applied moldings and plaques; and corner brackets at the eaves. It has been altered by the installation of a picture window on the facade under the veranda.
- 1590 A. Barber House (1860s): A handsome 1½-story, end-gable-roof, clapboard-sheathed, side-hall-plan dwelling with a 3-bay facade; a doorway framed by sidelights, pilasters, and an entablature; narrow corner pilasters; gable returns; and a long 1-story side ell with a flank-gable roof. Behind the house is a 1-story, gable- and flat-roof, mid-20th century office and studio building which is apparently a converted garage.
- 1608 O. Barber House (ca 1870): A 1½-story, flank-gable-roof dwelling with a 5-bay facade and a central entrance framed by sidelights, pilasters, and an entablature. Now sheathed with asbestos shingles, it stands behind a picket fence.
- 1613 House (1890s): A 2½-story, end-gable-roof, Queen Anne vernacular two-decker with side-hall entrances under a handsome porch with turned posts and post brackets, a 2-story bay window flanking the entrance porch, and a gabled dormer on each side. Its exterior has been resheathed with asbestos shingles.
- 1614-1616 J. & A. Barber Double House (ca 1875): A handsome 1½-story, flank-gable-roof, shingle-clad dwelling with a 6-bay facade containing paired central entrances under hoods on massive brackets. It stands behind a picket fence.
- 1621-1623 James Lewis House (late 19th century): A 2½-story, flank-gable-roof dwelling set well back from the street, with a central entrance under a turned-post portico and a side ell. It is now sheathed with aluminum siding, and all original trim has been covered or removed.

(See Continuation Sheet #8 ).

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Mendon Road (cont)

1626 O. Barber House (ca 1870): A tall 1½-story, flank-gable-roof, shingle-clad, late Greek Revival dwelling with a 5-bay facade, a central sidelight entrance framed by pilasters and an entablature, and entablature trim at the eaves.

1640 David Ross House (ca 1890): A 2½-story, end-gable-roof, Queen Anne vernacular dwelling with a 2-bay facade, a side-hall entrance under a portico with a frieze of carved rosettes and eaves brackets, a side pavilion with a gable roof, bargeboards with applied moldings and plaques, and corner eaves brackets. It has recently been resheathed with aluminum siding; although the window frames have been covered, much of the other detailing remains intact.

1666 House (ca 1930): A 1½-story, end-gable-roof dwelling with a side-hall entrance under a Tuscan-column porch and a triple window to one side of the entrance.

\*\* (1675) (See Continuation Sheet #12).

1677 Samuel Weatherhead House (early 19th century): A fine 2½-story, flank-gable-roof, clapboard-sheathed late Federal dwelling with some later alterations. It has a 5-bay facade, a central entrance under an early 20th-century gable-roof portico with tapered square posts, narrow paneled corner pilasters, gable returns, paired interior chimneys, and a rear ell.

MIDDLE STREET

19-20 Lonsdale Company Double House (1867): Type A dwelling.

21-22 Lonsdale Company Double House (1867): Type A dwelling.

23-24 Lonsdale Company Double House (1867): Type A dwelling.

25-26 Lonsdale Company Double House (1867): Type A dwelling.

27-28 Lonsdale Company Double House (1867): Type A dwelling.

29-30 Lonsdale Company Double House (1867): Type A dwelling.

47-51 Lonsdale Company Tenement (1867): Type B dwelling. Now derelict.

52-54 Lonsdale Company Tenement (1867): Type B dwelling.

55-57 Lonsdale Company Tenement (1867): Type B dwelling.

(61-62) Lonsdale Company Tenement (1867): Type B dwelling.

(See Continuation Sheet #9).

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Middle Street (cont)

63-64-65- Lonsdale Company Row House (1867): A long, tall 1½-story,  
66-67-68 flank-gable-roof brick structure different in form from Type  
A and B dwellings but identical in material, scale, and de-  
tailing, with transom-topped entrances, punched segmental-  
arch door and window openings, small attic windows under the  
eaves, and exposed rafters forming eaves brackets. It has  
an 18-bay facade composed of a 3-bay, side-hall-entrance  
modular unit repeated six times.

78-80-84 Lonsdale Company Tenement (1867): A large, tall 2½-story,  
flank-gable-roof brick structure different in form from Type  
A and B dwellings but identical in material, scale, and de-  
tailing, with transom-topped entrances, punched segmental-  
arch door and window openings, small attic windows under the  
eaves, and exposed rafters forming eaves brackets. It has an  
18-bay facade with four irregularly placed entrances.

OLD ANGELL ROAD

1-3 House (early 20th century): A 2½-story, end-gable-roof two-  
decker with side-hall entrances, a 2-story porch wrapping  
around the corner facing the intersection of Old Angell and  
Mendon Roads, and full-length side shed dormers, one extended  
out partially over the porch. It is now sheathed with asphalt  
shingles.

7-9-11 House (early 20th century): A 2½-story, end-gable-roof two-  
decker with side-hall entrances and a 2-story bay window to  
one side of the entrances. It is now covered with aluminum  
siding and all original trim has been covered or removed.

SCOTT ROAD

N.B. Addresses on this street have been allotted out of sequence.

2 House (early 20th century): A small 1½-story, flank-gable-  
roof dwelling with front and rear shed dormers breaking up  
through the eaves, an asymmetrical facade, a front porch with  
turned posts, and asbestos siding.

4 J. Roach Tenement (ca 1890s): A 3-story, flank-gable-roof,  
multi-unit residential structure with entrances on the sides  
and overhanging eaves. The original windows have been re-  
placed with sliding casements and the exterior has been re-  
sheathed with vertical-board siding on the first story and  
aluminum siding on the upper stories, leaving none of the  
original trim.

(See Continuation Sheet #10).

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Scott Road (cont)

- 4 rear House (late 19th century): A small 2-story, flank-gable-roof structure with 1- and 2-story, shed-roof projections on the front and a variety of dark-stained vertical-board and white clapboard siding. It was probably originally a barn or other type of outbuilding for number 4, later converted to a dwelling.
- 6-8 Tenement (ca 1905): A large 2½-story, multi-unit residential structure with a flank gable roof containing a central front gable and a pair of two-story end porches on the facade with a pair of two-story bay windows centered between them. The exterior is now covered with asphalt shingles.
- 9 M. Maloy House (1870s): A tall 2½-story, flank-gable-roof dwelling with a central entrance under a shed hood on jigsaw braces and an asymmetrical 4-bay facade containing double and single windows. It is now covered with asbestos shingles.
- 11 House (late 19th century): A 1½-story, end-gable-roof vernacular dwelling with a turned-post entrance porch now partly filled in, turned to face a right-of-way running off Scott Road. It is now sheathed with aluminum siding which covers the original window frames and corner boards.
- 13 Mrs. M. McNally House (ca 1880): A tall 2½-story, flank-gable-roof dwelling with a 5-bay facade, a central entrance under a door hood carried on massive brackets, small paired eaves brackets, and an early 20th-century side porch with square piers on fieldstone pedestals. The exterior is now covered with asbestos shingles.
- 18 M. Keough House (ca 1875): A handsome, tall, 2½-story, flank-gable-roof, clapboard-sheathed dwelling with a 5-bay facade, a central entrance under a hood carried on massive brackets, and shallow window hoods on small brackets. It is set above the street on a terrace with a stuccoed stone retaining wall.
- (20) J. McGrane Tenement (late 19th century): A large, tall, 2½-story, flank-gable-roof, clapboard-sheathed multi-family dwelling with a 4-bay facade containing double and single windows and entrances placed at the rear.
- (22) T. Shea House (late 19th century): A 2-story, L-shaped, clapboard-sheathed dwelling with intersecting gable roofs and shallow window hoods on small brackets.

(See Continuation Sheet # 11).

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Scott Road (cont)

- (15) Mrs. Malloy House (ca 1870): A 2-story, flank-gable-roof, side-hall-plan dwelling with a 3-bay facade, a slightly shorter 2-story side ell, and a front veranda with turned posts. It is now sheathed in aluminum siding and all original trim has been covered or removed.
- 21-23 Mrs. Wild Double House (ca 1875-80): A handsome 1½-story, flank-gable-roof, clapboard-sheathed dwelling with a mirror-image facade containing a pair of bay windows set between a pair of front entrances with transoms and molded caps. There are small windows under the front and rear eaves, extended rafters forming eaves brackets, and ornamental jigsaw screens in the gable peaks.
- 25 W. Wild House (late 19th century): A tall 2½-story, end-gable-roof, side-hall-plan two-decker with an off-center two-story bay window on the facade. It has been altered by the application of artificial brick veneer and aluminum siding, leaving no original trim.
- 27 W. Holden House (ca 1875-80): A handsome, tall, 2½-story, flank-gable-roof, clapboard-sheathed dwelling with a 5-bay facade; a central entrance under a door hood on massive brackets; bracketed window hoods; and a 1-story, flank-gable-roof, 20th-century addition on the southeast corner. It is set behind a white picket fence.

NON-CONTRIBUTING STRUCTURES:

MENDON ROAD

- 1368 Thompson's Tackle and Bait Shop (mid-20th century): A 1-story, end-gable-roof, clapboard-sheathed structure with an asymmetrical facade, apparently a converted garage.
- 1530 Ashton Fire Station (ca 1970): A 1-story modern structure with vertical metal-panel walls and a low-pitch end-gable roof.

SCOTT ROAD

- (11R) House (early 20th century): A nondescript 1½-story, gable-roof dwelling on a right-of-way running off Scott Road. It is sheathed with aluminum siding.

(See Continuation Sheet #12).

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Scott Road (cont)

- (19) House (1950s): A small 1-story, flank-gable-roof, ranch-type tract house with an asymmetrical facade containing an entrance and a picture window under an off-center front gable. It is sheathed with aluminum siding.
- 44 House (1960s): A long 1-story, flank-gable-roof, shingle-clad, ranch-type tract house with an asymmetrical facade and an enclosed side porch.
- (46) (House (1960s): A 1½-story, flank-gable-roof, shingle-clad, Cape Cod-type tract house with a stone end-wall chimney and a 3-bay facade with a central entrance between a bay window and a single double-hung window.
- (48) House (early 1970s): A 1-story, end-gable-roof, shingle-clad dwelling resembling a ranch-type house set with its end to the street, with a gable-roof front porch.

\*\*Addendum

Mendon Road

- (1675) House (20th century): A 1½-story, flank-gable-roof, shingle-clad dwelling with a 3-bay facade, a central entrance, and a front shed dormer. It is set on a low hill with the basement at grade in front and a basement-level garage addition at an angle off one front corner.

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changed hands several times before the Lonsdale Company acquired it in the 1840s. This company, one of the most prosperous and productive textile-manufacturing firms in Rhode Island, had been established between 1831 and 1834 by the distinguished Providence mercantile house of Brown & Ives, and served to channel the China-trade profits of the Brown and Ives families into industrial ventures.

During the Lonsdale Company's tenure the mill and village prospered and grew. The opening of the Providence & Worcester Railroad on the Cumberland side of the river in 1848 probably contributed to development, for it provided a more practical and reliable means of transportation than the canal. Fortunes improved with the boom precipitated by the Civil War. In 1863 the Lonsdale Company purchased more land on the Cumberland side, surrounding the railroad tracks, and in 1867 it erected a large new brick mill and a group of brick workers' houses. The Company also built a larger, brick schoolhouse for the school district and a new church for the Episcopal parish. The last decades of the nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth witnessed the construction of more buildings along Mendon and Scott Roads, all erected for private individuals rather than the company.

The company-built structures of the 1860s at Ashton are a fine example of a typical nineteenth-century Rhode Island mill village complex built by paternalistic industrialists. The fact that these are family residences reflects the practice of employing children commonly followed in Rhode Island, hence the need to supply housing for entire families. This differed from the system generally followed in large factories in Massachusetts, which relied on the employment of single women who could be sheltered in boarding houses. The rows of dwellings near the mill are especially notable for their overall architectural unity, achieved without resorting to strict uniformity. The use of brick for the houses is somewhat unusual for Rhode Island and is found for the most part only in other Lonsdale Company villages.

Though their simple vernacular forms and styles add to the character of the place, the buildings of the "upper village" along Mendon and Scott Roads are less important for architectural reasons. They are more interesting as a manifestation of a pattern of social mobility peculiar to the Lonsdale Company villages. According to contemporary sources, the Lonsdale Company paid slightly higher wages than other New England textile-manufacturing firms, and in some cases operatives were able to save enough to build their own homes and even to set up their own businesses, something which rarely occurred in other company-built mill settlements. Though it is impossible to document the fact that owners of the residences of Ashton's "upper village" were employees of the mill, the fact that most of the houses built on Scott Road were originally owned by people with Irish surnames suggests that they were built by employees or

(See Continuation Sheet #14).

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former employees of the mill. One case which can be documented is that of John Barnes, an English immigrant who came to work for the Lonsdale Company in 1869 and quit the mill in 1874 to run his own grocery and dry-goods business in the village.

The development of Ashton illustrates the typical pattern of development and expansion of the textile industry in nineteenth-century Rhode Island. To best utilize available water power, early mill owners often had to locate mills on sites in isolated, unpopulated rural areas. To attract workers, the proprietors had to build satisfactory housing and usually stores, schools, and churches as well to serve the needs of the new community. The power limitations imposed by the relatively small size of the state's rivers forced entrepreneurs who wished to expand to acquire the mill privileges of others or to find and build upon new sites. Thus numerous small mill villages were scattered along streams throughout the Rhode Island countryside. Though ownership of most of these villages was eventually consolidated in the hands of a few large firms, operations were generally not consolidated. Even after the advent of steam engines liberated mill owners from sole reliance on water power, permitting extensive expansion on a single site, industrialists continued to carry on operations at several different sites and often to expand several or all of their factories rather than one alone. Small, isolated country mill villages were not entirely unique to Rhode Island and could be found along small streams in other parts of New England. They flourished longer in Rhode Island than elsewhere, however, largely because the conservatism of local mill owners militated against revolutionary changes in operating methods or procedures. Such villages are thus particularly characteristic of development patterns in this state. At Ashton, the early factory, built in an uninhabited rural area with adjunct housing, was acquired by the Lonsdale Company during the era of ownership consolidation. The company continued to operate its mills down river at Lonsdale and at Ashton as well and, when it expanded, it built new factories at both Lonsdale and Ashton and established a new mill at Berkeley, on the Blackstone between the two other villages. In addition to its individual significance, Ashton is important as a surviving element of the Lonsdale Company's production complex in the Blackstone Valley. The village of Berkeley is already a National Register Historic District and Lonsdale is recommended for nomination. Together these three villages provide a rare comprehensive picture of the mode of operation of one of Rhode Island's foremost textile-manufacturing firms.

In the nineteenth century, the village of Ashton encompassed both sides of the river, and a bridge ran across the Blackstone just north of the brick mill. After the completion of the brick mill, the old mill on the Lincoln side was converted to a storehouse (it has since been demolished) and the Cumberland part of the village became the focus of activity. Construction of the Ashton Viaduct between 1934 and 1945, connecting the ridges above the Blackstone Valley flood plain, and demolition of the old bridge connecting the riverbanks cut off the original

(See Continuation Sheet #15).



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settlement in Lincoln from the rest of the village in Cumberland. Today the remnants of the Lincoln part of the village, known as Old Ashton, are recommended for nomination to the National Register as surviving elements of the first manufacturing center established in the present town of Lincoln. The Ashton district in Cumberland certainly deserves listing in the Register for reflecting the continued development of this Blackstone River industrial site.

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Hoag, Wade & Co., History of the State of Rhode Island (Philadelphia:  
1878), pp. 117-118

"Lonsdale and Ashton Mills," Providence Journal, 2 May 1886, p. 8.

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easterly, southerly, and westerly following the bounds of lot 69 to the rear line of lot 70; thence southerly along the rear line of lot 70 to the corner formed by the intersection of said lot's southern boundary; thence south-southwesterly from said corner cutting across a portion of lot 24 to the northeasterly corner of lot 26; thence southerly along the rear line of lot 26 to a corner formed by the intersection of lot 26's southern boundary; thence southerly from said corner cutting across a portion of lot 24 to the intersection of the northwesterly and westerly boundaries of lot 111; thence northeasterly and southeasterly following the boundary of lot 111 to the point of intersection of the rear lines of lots 116 and 110; thence northeasterly along the rear lines of lots 110, 118, and 63 and continuing in a straight line across a portion of lot 27 to a point determined by an extension of the northeasterly boundary of lot 35; thence south-easterly across lot 27 and Scott Road following said extended line and continuing along the northeasterly boundary of lot 35; thence southwesterly along the rear lines of lots 35 and 36; thence northwesterly along the southwesterly boundary of lot 36 to a point opposite the rear line of lot 38; thence southwesterly across a right-of-way following the rear lines of lots 38, 33, 127, 129, 40, 41, 42, and 43 to the rear line of lot 115; thence southerly, easterly, and southerly following the boundary of lot 115 to the northerly boundary of lot 45; thence east-northeasterly along the northern boundary of lot 45; thence south-southeasterly along the easterly boundaries of lots 45 and 44 to the southeasterly corner of lot 44; thence southwesterly and southerly along lines marking the state highway line and the westerly boundary of lot 243, continuing across Angell Road; thence westerly and southerly, along lines constituting the state highway line and the boundary of lot 8, continuing southerly along a line across a portion of lot 8 running parallel to Mendon Road about 85 feet east of said road, to the northwest corner of lot 89; thence easterly, southerly and westerly following the boundary of lot 89 to a point opposite the rear line of lot 85; thence southeasterly across Old Angell Road and continuing along the rear line of lot 85; thence northwesterly along the southwesterly boundary of lot 85 to the line between lots 201 and lot 126; thence southerly, west-southwesterly, and southerly along the boundaries between lot 201 and lots 126 and 182 to the southwesterly corner of lot 182; thence southwesterly from said corner across a portion of lot 201 to the northeasterly corner of lot 7; thence southerly and westerly following the boundary of lot 7 and continuing in a straight line across Mendon Road to a point on the westerly curb of said road; thence northerly along the westerly curb of Mendon Road to the southern boundary of lot 5, assessor's plat 58; thence westerly, northwesterly, and northerly following the boundary of lot 5 to the point of intersection of the boundary between lot 64 and Wiggin Street; thence westerly along the southern edge of Wiggin Street, continuing across Front Street and the Providence & Worcester Railroad and along the southern boundary of lot 40 to the easterly bank of the Blackstone River; thence northerly along the easterly bank of said river to the Ashton Dam; thence westerly, northerly, and

(See Continuation Sheet #18).

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easterly to encompass the Ashton Dam across the Blackstone River; thence northerly along the easterly bank of said river to a point determined by an extension of the northern boundary line of lot 48; thence easterly along said extended line across a portion of lot 51 and the Providence & Worcester Railroad and continuing along the northern boundary of lot 48 to the rear line of lot 49; thence northerly and easterly following the boundaries of lot 49 to the westerly curb of Mendon Road; thence across Mendon Road to the point of beginning.

**Verbal Boundary Justification**

The boundaries of the district were drawn to include all the upper and lower villages and to exclude modern intrusions as much as possible. In some cases non-contributing properties have been included to encompass both sides of certain streets in the district (e.g. 11 B and 44, (46), (48) Scott Road). Portions of some large, vacant lots have been included because features such as vegetation or stone walls contribute to the visual continuity of the district or screen non-contributing structures from view (i.e. portions of lots 8, 24, and 201 in assessor's plat 39).

## 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates N.A.

Builder/Architect N.A.

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Ashton Historic District is significant in part for its readily perceived nineteenth-century environmental character amid twentieth-century suburban development in the Blackstone Valley. Ashton's physical fabric, composed of vernacular structures reflecting the influence of various nineteenth-century styles, is largely the product of its evolution and growth in the 1800s from a travelers' waystop into a manufacturing settlement and service center for the surrounding countryside. The construction here of company-built family dwelling units and of privately built houses reflects distinctive local development patterns, making the village an important artifact of social history. The village also represents an important undertaking of the Lonsdale Company, at that time one of the top three manufacturing firms in Rhode Island, owned and operated by the prominent and powerful, interrelated Brown and Ives families of Providence. The structures erected here by the Lonsdale Company--mill, housing, church, and schoolhouse--constitute a fine example of one type of nineteenth-century community planning: the paternalistic, company-built mill village designed to meet most if not all of the needs of its inhabitants. The rows of brick dwellings near the mill are especially noteworthy for the strong visual impact created by the grouping of a few standard building types similar in form and identical in scale, materials, and detailing.

Ashton began to develop where Mendon Road, the chief highway from Providence through the Blackstone Valley, passed near a ford across the river known as Pray's Wade or Landing. From this point roads led east toward Abbott's Run and Arnold Mills, Rhode Island, and Attleboro, Massachusetts, and west toward the village of Limerock (now a National Register Historic District) in the present town of Lincoln. In the early nineteenth century, perhaps earlier, an inn (now demolished) was located near the intersection of Mendon and Old Angell Roads.

Industrial development of the area began when the Smithfield Cotton & Woolen Company purchased land for a mill privilege on the Lincoln side of the river near the ford. Between 1810 and 1815 the Smithfield Company built a small mill and a few workers' houses. The settlement grew slowly and by the late 1830s included some seven or eight buildings on the Cumberland side of the river, one of them a schoolhouse to serve the few villagers and the farm families of School District 14. In spite of the construction of the Blackstone Canal through here in the 1820s, the mill was apparently not very successful, for it was not enlarged and

(See Continuation Sheet #13).

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Bayles, Richard M., History of Providence County, R.I. (New York: 1981), p. 247.

Hitchcock, Henry-Russell, Rhode Island Architecture (Reprint edition, Cambridge: 1968), pp. 36-43.

(See Continuation Sheet #16).

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property approx. 61 acres

Quadrangle name Pawtucket

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

### UMT References

A 

1	9
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2	9	8	1	8	0
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4	6	4	6	0	5	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B 

1	9
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2	9	8	6	8	0
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4	6	4	5	8	6	0
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Zone Easting Northing

C 

1	9
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2	9	8	6	8	0
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4	6	4	5	1	4	0
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D 

1	9
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2	9	8	4	2	0
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4	6	4	5	2	4	0
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E 

1	9
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2	9	8	0	1	0
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4	6	4	5	8	1	0
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F 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Beginning at the point of intersection of the easterly curb of Mendon Road and the northern boundary of lot 69, assessor's plat 39; thence  
(See Continuation Sheet #17).

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
N.A.			

state	code	county	code

## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Robert O. Jones, Jr., Senior Historic Preservation Planner

organization Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

date February 1982

street & number 150 Benefit Street

telephone 401-277-2678

city or town Providence

state Rhode Island

## 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 Frederick O. Williamson

title

date 9/25/84 (see letter)

For NPS use only

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

Delores Byers  
Keeper of the National Register










Included in the  
National Register

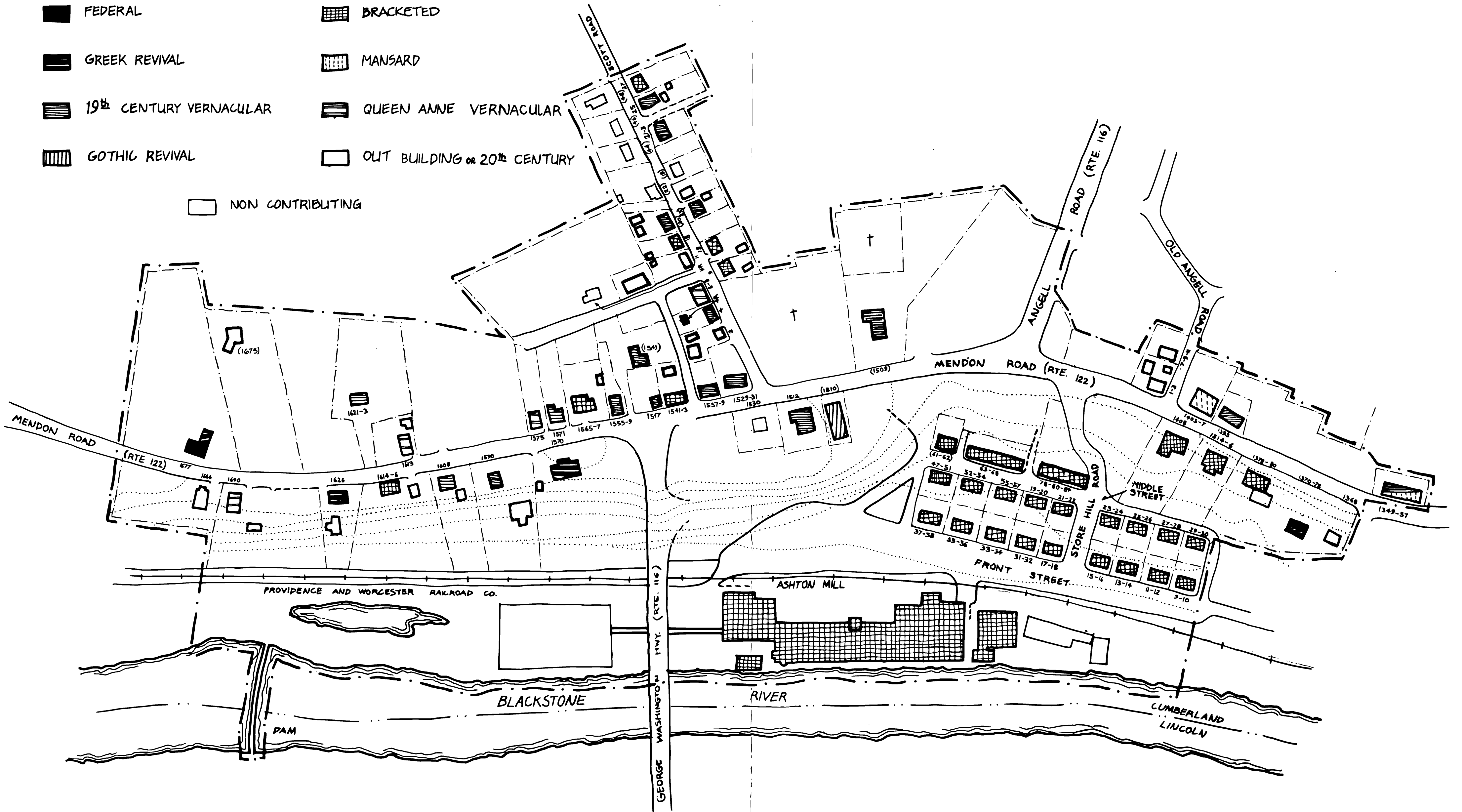
date 11-1-84

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

-  FEDERAL
-  GREEK REVIVAL
-  19<sup>th</sup> CENTURY VERNACULAR
-  GOTHIC REVIVAL
-  BRACKETED
-  MANSARD
-  QUEEN ANNE VERNACULAR
-  OUT BUILDING OR 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY
-  NON CONTRIBUTING



# ASHTON HISTORIC DISTRICT

CUMBERLAND, RHODE ISLAND

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION 1982

