

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0685411

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED OCT 2 1978
DATE ENTERED DEC 1 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 John Randall House

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Route 2 *SE of North Stonington on CT 2*
West side, about 2000' north of I-95

CITY, TOWN

North Stonington



VICINITY OF

2nd - Christopher J. Dodd

STATE

Connecticut

CODE

09

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

COUNTY

New London

CODE

011

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- MUSEUM
- COMMERCIAL
- PARK
- EDUCATIONAL
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- ENTERTAINMENT
- RELIGIOUS
- GOVERNMENT
- SCIENTIFIC
- INDUSTRIAL
- TRANSPORTATION
- MILITARY
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Harvey C. Perry

STREET & NUMBER 8 Margin Street

CITY, TOWN

Westerly

VICINITY OF

STATE

RI

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. North Stonington Town Clerk

STREET & NUMBER Town Hall - Main Street

CITY, TOWN

North Stonington

STATE

CT

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Connecticut Statewide Inventory of Historic Resources

DATE

1975

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

Connecticut Historical Commission

CITY, TOWN

Hartford

STATE

CT

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The John Randall House is an early 18th-century, 2½ story, central-chimney, gable-roofed frame dwelling, with some parts likely dating back to the 17th century. The house is reached by a long driveway, and since it is set back about 900', it is not visible from the highway. While this lack of access may be unfortunate, it is in itself of historic interest: the house antedates both of the nearby roads, early deeds mentioning only a "lane." In its isolated surroundings of meadows, an orchard and wood land separated by hedges and stone walls, the house faces south and has a variety of shrubs planted close by. There is a one-story small ell to the rear of the house, believed to date from about 1800. Because of the property's division and recombination, there are no "historic" boundaries to this farm. Instead, sufficient acreage was included in the site to reflect the diversity of the surrounding land.

The main facade is divided into five bays with a central entranceway, but it is asymmetrical: the east side is considerably larger and the windows are spaced further apart. The most notable exterior feature is the 18" overhang at the eaves in front. This was constructed by cantilevering a second plate out on the girts. On the exterior this cornice is plainly treated, with only narrow molding strips applied along the eaves and where the soffit and wall meet. The exterior walls are covered with aged wooden shingles, with no older material concealed beneath. Windows have replaced 12/12 sash and plain board frames. There is a transom of six rectangular lights above the wide front door of six raised panels. On either side are wide plain pilasters which support an entablature composed of a pulvinated frieze, a row of dentils and a boldly projecting crown. The chimney above the ridge line is built of brick covered with stucco. The masonry of the foundation, an ashlar of cut pink stone, appears to be a later facing over the fieldstone. There is an apron of large flat stones around the house.

The framing of the house repeats the asymmetry visible from the outside. The rooms on the east side are larger and have two summer beams, whereas the smaller west rooms have only one. One theory is that the east rooms are a later addition. The second front plate is visible in the attic and shows a distinct break at the east chimney girt. The roof framing is all of a piece, common rafters with collar beams. In both parts of the house, the framing members are very large in section, although only the rear chimney posts are flared. The house is "plank-framed" with butted inch-thick oak boards. The walls are very flexible, although this is not a serious problem.

The fieldstone masonry visible in the cellar is interesting. The chimney foundation is huge, occupying most of the west cellar and extending to the back wall of the house. It incorporates two sets of stone steps, one from the kitchen and another enclosed set at the front of the house, now blocked off at the top; there is also a large stone chamber beneath the kitchen floor and accessible by a trap door. The front wall of the cellar on the west side is four or five feet thick, much thicker than the continuation of the wall on the east side.

The interior has a great deal of historical integrity, with at least two periods represented. The porch is unusually large, extending back about 8½'. The stairs have square balusters and newels, with globular finials. Below the steps are scrollwork and panelling. The large east room's fireplace wall is covered with two rows of large rectangular raised panels. The fireplace has an early bolection molding as well as a molded mantelshelf and two very plain pilasters. These three elements seem to be parts of three separate schemes, as the shelf

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North Stonington, CT
CONTINUATION SHEET

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does not rest on the pilasters as an entablature but is isolated above. The posts, girts and summers are enclosed in beaded casings. The west room is smaller and in place of the panelling there is a mantel similar in composition to the main entrance: there is a three-level molded frame around the opening and above, a pulvinated frieze, a row of dentils, and a prominent molded shelf forming the cornice. The ceiling is plastered and conceals the summer. Like the room opposite, there is a beaded baseboard and molded chair-rail. There is a two-part cupboard with panelled doors next to the fireplace, and in the outside corner, a corner cupboard which looks old but not original to this corner.

The west chamber has an outstanding panel composition, similar to that in the east lower room but with two arched panels above the fireplace, which has only a wide bolection molding. The middle panels of this wall do not quite match the others and indeed, this section has been patched in with plaster as a filler. It has been suggested that this wall was originally in the room below, where the later Georgian mantel is now. This is quite likely, since the added panel section corresponds quite closely to the head of the cellar stairs which are now blocked off. The summer casing in this room is slightly different from that in the lower room, with a cove molding terminating in a bead. Also, the molding underneath the chimney girt is continued around the room as a cornice. The other two chambers are plain with very simple mantels.

All of the six fireplaces are shallow with bevelled sides of cut stone, and seem reworked. In the attic there is a stone smoke chamber built out from the stack, with small wooden door on "butterfly" hinges. The floors throughout the house are old, probably of hard pine.

The house was restored about 1930 by Norman Isham. At that time, the original features described above were supplemented by new and reused material. Beam casings in the east chamber were replaced, panelled shutters were added to downstairs rooms where grooves in the framing implied their presence, the kitchen was finished with feather-edged boards, the present 12/12 sash was installed, and considerable work to the first floor joists was done.

The house has been dated between 1690 to 1720, based partly on knowledge of the Randall family and analagous buildings in North Stonington and Stonington. In both Edgar Heermance's Connecticut Guide and the Federal Writers' Guide, the house is confused with another Randall homestead in Stonington nearby, called the Deacon Gershom Palmer or Colonel William Randall House.

8. SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES c. 1690-1720

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Norman Isham, restoration architect

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The John Randall House is an important resource for the study of early domestic architecture. Although the documentary evidence for the house before 1740 is thin, the material itself is valuable in increasing the information base upon which generalizations about early construction are made. Minute examination of this house and comparison with others nearby, both extant and demolished but previously recorded, would shed light on the evolution of house forms, the relationship of architecture and social position, the influence of local building traditions, and the process by which houses were modified to suit changing conditions. Even without such an exhaustive inquiry, however, the large amount of historic material preserved in this house suggests several topics for speculation.

The house's plank framing, for example, is a technique not uncommon in early Connecticut houses. The use of inch boards rather than thicker wood is unusual, however, and indicates a greater variety in construction that is usually acknowledged. The framed cornice overhang is another notable feature, unusual in its great projection. The Samuel Miner House in North Stonington, one room in plan, has a nearly identical cornice and has been dated around 1720, so perhaps this is a local tradition. Other constructional features which are unusual are the enclosed stone steps and the odd cache beneath the kitchen floor.

The interior contains much that is original, including beaded casings, old floors, panelled walls, and the smoke chamber. The moving of the one set of panelling to the upstairs chamber is interesting, especially since it gave way to a fireplace treatment obviously intended to complement the later and more Classical front entrance treatment. The latter two features are good country examples of late Georgian Classical motifs.

Many old houses are alleged to have developed from small dwellings one room in plan, but few have as good a claim as this one. The position of the front cellar steps and the thickness of the west front foundation wall suggest that the foundation does not quite fit this house: perhaps an earlier, smaller house occupied the site, but when the present structure was built, the plane of the front wall was moved forward. Moreover, the distinct differences in framing and room sizes as well as discontinuities in foundation masonry and the front plate all point to an enlargement of the house through the addition of the east rooms. As in some other houses thought to have been enlarged, symmetry was not a concern. Without promoting any general theory, it seems reasonable to associate some of these changes, both interior and structural, to the increased prosperity of the family during the 18th century.

The land was settled around 1690 by John Randall of Westerly, Rhode Island. Although not an original proprietor, he seems to have been moderately prosperous

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Stonington Land Records, 5:136, 279; 6:159, 281; 7:347, 357; 10:310-312.

Wheeler, Richard A. History of the Town of Stonington. New London: The Day Publishing Co., 1900.

Will of John Randall, 1759, New London Probate Records, H29, p. 30.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 13.3

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,9	26,120,0	45,8,87,9,0	B	1,9	26,100,0	45,8,86,2,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,9	26,07,9,0	45,8,86,2,0	D	1,9	26,07,9,0	45,8,87,9,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The historic property is part of Parcel 10, North Stonington Assessor's Map 253 and is bounded as follows: beginning at the north corner of the driveway and Route 2, the boundary crosses the driveway and follows the property line southwesterly about 800' until it comes to the point where the property line turns south. From this point the boundary runs west 8° south about 715' and then runs northerly in a line with the western edge of the cleared pasture to the west of the house, turning east

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE: Bruce Clouette, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Connecticut Historical Commission DATE: May 30, 1978

STREET & NUMBER: 59 South Prospect Street TELEPHONE: (203) 566-3005

CITY OR TOWN: Hartford STATE: 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 M. Starnes*

TITLE: Director, Connecticut Historical Commission DATE: September 25, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST: *Charles Obermeyer* DATE: 12.1.78

~~DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION~~ ~~KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER~~

DATE: 12/1/78

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as a farmer. His son John (1701-1761) added substantially to the family holdings, and was more prominent socially, receiving a commission as a militia captain. He probably lived in this house from the 1730's on. His estate in 1761 included several hundred acres, 50 head of cattle, a dozen horses, over a hundred sheep, and five Black slaves. The house is described as a two-story dwelling with east and west rooms. Subsequent generations of Randalls preserved this social standing, adding more land and serving as local civil and militia leaders.

Norman Isham, who directed the restoration of the house, was one of the earliest to study in detail pre-Revolutionary domestic architecture. He is well known for his work (with Albert Brown), Early Connecticut Houses, first published in 1900.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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and running along the north edge of the same pasture and returning in a straight line to the first point.