United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

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	GOVERNOR SMITH H	IOMESTEAD		
and/or common	WEATHERSTONE			
2. Loca	ition			
street & number	SOUTH MAIN STREE	T		\underline{NA} not for publication
city, town	SHARON	NA_ vicinity of 6th	congressional district	<u> </u>
state	CONNECTICUT co	de 09 county	Litchfield	code 005
3. Clas	sification			
Category district _X_ building(s) structure site object	Ownership public _X private both Public Acquisition in process being considered NA	Status X occupied unoccupied work in progress Accessible yes: restricted yes: unrestricted x no	Present Use agriculture commercial educational entertainment government industrial military	museum park _X private residence religious scientific transportation other:
4. Own	er of Prope			
name street & number	John H. and Harr Weatherstone, So			
city, town	Sharon	NA_ vicinity of	state	Connecticut 06069
5. Loca	tion of Leg	al Descripti	on	
	sity of deeds, etc.	aron Land Records, To	wn Hall	
street & number	North Main	Street		
city, town	Sharon		state	Connecticut
6. Repr	esentation	in Existing	Surveys	
title State	Register of Histo	ric Places has this pro	operty been determined e	elegible? yes _X no
date	1975		federal \underline{X} st	ate county local
depository for su	rvey records Conn	ecticut Historical C	Commission	
city, town ^H	lartford		state	Connecticut

7. Description

Condition		Check one
<u>X</u> excellent	deteriorated	unaltered
good	ruins	X altered
fair	unexposed	
•		altered

Check one <u>X</u> original site ___ moved date ____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Governor Smith Homestead, now known as Weatherstone, enjoys a fine building site on ground that slopes up to the east at the south end of the green in Sharon, Connecticut.From its elevated position, the house looks out over the Main Street and green that were established in 1739 to be 225 feet wide and a mile and a half long with roadways, each bordered by rows of elms, on both sides of the green itself.¹ Located in the remote northwestern Connecticut highlands, west of the Housatonic River, Sharon was the last town to be formed by the Colony of Connecticut.² The boundaries were laid out in 1732, and the land was settled in 1739, a full century later than the first Connecticut settlements on Long Island Sound and along the banks of the principal rivers.

The square, grey stone, Georgian mansion (Photograph 1) was built starting in 1765. A $31 \ge 29$ -foot wing, that was to become the rear ell, was built first and lived in while the construction of the main 56 ≥ 56 -foot block was carried forward.³ The house reached substantially its present form by 1777, although final completion awaited the end of the Revolutionary War.

The main block of the Homestead is a three-story, five-bay, granite Georgian house with double-hipped roof, peaked dormers, "Chinese Chippendale" balustrades, and three tall chimneys. The breadth of the structure, the two rows of five apertures in the first and second stories, and the slightly flared eaves all combine to give the design a horizontal orientation that is countered by a vertical thrust in the center of the facade. The tall six-panelled, 47 x 98-inch, central, front door, flanked by side lights, starts the eye moving upward. In the second story there is a tripartite window with a broken pediment and in the third story there is a wheel window. A visual cap to these vertical elements is provided by a peaked gable in the roof over the wheel window, the only gable in the house. The basement is exposed on the facade, and the front door is approached from grade by two curving stone stairs, not original, with iron railings (Photograph 2). The nine facade windows are 12-over-12 double-hung sash. All first and second-story apertures of the facade have quoin-shaped brick surrounds.

High stone retaining walls that flank the facade support embankments or terraces in front of the north and south elevations. The arrangement of the first floor of the north elevation, not original, consists of a central side door flanked on each side by two tall 12-over-16 windows with shutters. The second floor has five 12-over-12 windows, while in the roof there are two peaked dormers between two tall chimneys (Photographs 1 and 3).

On the south elevation there is a wide, one-story porch with a low roof and square wood posts. Access from the house to the porch, and to the terrace that extends east of it, is through French doors located in the center of the porch, and towards the back (Photograph 4). While presumably this elevation originally had two chimneys, now there is only one. The chimney toward the back no longer is in its expected position; its place on the roof has been taken by a third dormer. Removal of the chimney also made possible a window in its place at the second floor, and at the first floor made possible the French doors to the porch.

FHR-8-300 (11-78) (11/78) United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

Weatherstone, Sharon, CT.

Continuation sheet

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Description



The wing to the rear extends eastward from the southeast corner of the house. There is a chimney in the common wall between the wing and the main block. In the 20th century the wing has been extended by construction of a narrower section, in stone, with hipped roof similar to the original wing, and with its own chimney. Further one-story frame additions to the east include garages (Sketch map B and Photographs 5 and 6)

Item number

7

On the interior, the front doorway leads to a wide central hall, flanked by drawing room and library, that runs back to a wide north-south hall, not original. This transverse hall connects the side door on the south with that of the north. The drawing-room, the north front room, has original molded cornice⁴ and is dominated by its chimney piece, which is a 20th-century reproduction based on a photograph of the original(Photo 7). The library, the south front room, is a 1620 Jacobean carved and panelled room brought in the late 1930's from Hallstead House, Bury St., Edmunds, England.The original room, except for the mantel piece, is in place underneath the present room. The present Jacobean mantel is a composition of arches supported by pedestals with carved figures and guilloche panels over a shelf with gadrooned edge that is supported by reeded pilasters (Photograph 8).

The stairway to the second floor rises along the west wall to the transverse hall to a landing in front of windows in the south wall. Most of the first floor behind the transverse hall is occupied by the living room, with beamed ceiling, that enjoys a large fireplace in the chimney located in the common wall between the main block and the wing. The living room is well lighted by its glazed south wall with French doors opening onto the south terrace. Most of the originl wing is now given over to the dining room. A large bow window in its south wall was added in the 20th century. The added stone section of the wing is the kitchen.

Originally, the house had floors of wide pine boards. During the 19th century they were covered by four-inch maple, and in the 20th century by narrow oak floors. All three layers are generally in place throughout the house with the exception of the master bedroom, over the drawing room, where the original pine has been exposed. This room has its original mantel shelf, as does the second floor study, over the library. The fireplace wall in the study to the east of the mantel has a double cupboard with two tiers of butterfly shelves side by side.

The high basement has a door on the front of the house directly under the main entrance. The room to the right (south) in the basement, under the library, has a large fireplace now filled in with stone but with wood lintel and oven, at upper left front, still in place. This basement room, therefore, presumably was the original kitchen. To the right of the fireplace, toward the front, there is the outline of an exterior door, now filled in, in the south wall. A similar exterior basement door existed in the corresponding position of the north wall,⁵ indicating that originally the exterior of the basement walls were exposed on both sides as well as in the front.

The farm buildings of Weatherstone are located approximately 700 feet south of the house. Built in 1922 in the Colonial Revival style, to replace older structures, they are one-and two-story clapboard buildings, forming a cohesive grouping, and consisting of a barn, dormitory for workers, garage with chauffeur's quarters, gardener's cottage, ice house, farm implement shed, and pump house (Sketch Map C and Photograph 9).

The final structure on the property is the greenhouse, situated directly behind the mansion. It is in two sections, the glasshouse section has a wood frame and gabled roof with finials at the gable peaks. It is connected to a one-story, flat-roofed clapboard section (Photograph 10).

(11/78) United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Weatherstone, Sharon, CT.

Continuation sheet Description

Item number 7



2

Page

Originally, the land that went with the house amounted to hundreds or perhaps thousands of acres. For this nomination, which identifies the significance of the house, its setting, and its outbuildings, the boundaries have been drawn to include the house, its frontage on the green, and the outbuildings, appropriately for the purpose of the nomination, encompassing about 15 acres, as shown on Sketch Map A.

1. The space devoted to Main Street and the green has not been altered over the years, but the dual roadway on each side has given way to a single highway in the center.

2. Benton, p.449. Later towns owed their inception to private sponsorship.

3. The same sequence, of building the rear wing first and living in it for a period of years while the main block was under construction, was followed at the contemporary Rev. Joseph Bellamy House in nearby Bethlehem, Connecticut (nomination to the National Rgister of Historic Places pending).

4. A picture in Harland, p.344, shows the cornice.

5. A picture in Harland, p.337, shows this door in the exposed north elevation basement.

8. Significance



Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Governor Smith Homestead, a large, 18th-century, stone, Georgian manor house, has been an architectural presence of distinction on the Sharon green for more than 200 years (Criterion C). John Cotton Smith, governor of Connecticut during the War of 1812, lived here when he led, and lost, the post-war fight against the adoption of the constitution of 1818 that brought about the belated separation of church and state in Connecticut (Criterion B).

The house was built by the governor's uncle, Simeon Smith, M.D. (1735-1804). A fifth generation descendant of the Rev. Henry Smith, first pastor of Wethersfield, Connecticut, Simeon Smith, was born in Suffield, Connecticut, studied medicine in Edinburgh, and came to Sharon to practice medicine in 1759. He operated a drug store, imported drugs from London and Amsterdam that he resold widely, and speculated in land in Connecticut, New York, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Canada. As Simeon Smith had travelled in England, the speculation is that he planned his house after English manor houses of the time. The red brick door and window surrounds of the facade, laid in the pattern of quoins, are an element found in contemporary houses of the English countryside. According to tradition, ¹ he followed the practice, then not uncommon in England, of engaging Italian craftsmen to build his house, bringing a master builder or architect, whose name is not known, from Genoa together with a group of Italian stone masons to erect the structure.

The foundations were put in place in 1765, the rear wing raised first, the superstructure of the main block begun in 1773 using stone quarried nearby, and the building roofed and plastered in 1775.

During the Revolutionary War, Simeon Smith was captain of a company of Sharon men who fought in the Long Island campaign, while his brother, the Rev. Cotton Mather Smith (1731-1806), Congregational minister of Sharon for more than 50 years, served as chaplain at Ti-conderoga. Simeon Smith's house was on the route followed through Sharon when Burgoyne's army, as prisoners of war, was marched into Connecticut. On that occasion, while the army was encamped for the night in the meadow across the street, the American officers dined at Weatherstone.

As the hostilities drew to a close, it became possible to complete the house and to resume nonwarlike activities. One such enterprise was the convening at the invitation of Dr. Smith, of medical conventions at Weatherstone on July 5, 1779 and again in January of 1780. This group of physicians from Massachusetts, New York and Connecticut declared themselves to be the

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet.

		hical Data			
-	nominated proper name Elsworth nces	=		Quadrangle s	scale 1:24,000
	6 2 6 6 2 0 asting	4 6 3 6 3 8 0 Northing	B 1 ₁ 8 Zone		_ 6 3 6 3 8 0 orthing
	5 2 16 5 16 10	4 16 3 16 2 8 0	d <mark>1 18</mark> f 118		16 316 01210 16 316 31210
G			⊢∟∟		
The bound map enti-	dary of the W tled "Boundar	ion and justification leatherstone nomina ry, Sketch Map A" a	and drawn at a	scale of 300 fee	on the accompan t to the inch.
state	tes and countie	es for properties overl code N/A	county N/A	ounty boundaries	code N/A
state	N/A	code N/A	county N/A		code N/A
		epared By			code
organization street & num		ral Historian ise Hill Drive		late November 27, elephone 203 521-3	
city or town		rtford, CT.		tate Connecticut	
		storic Pres		Officer Ce	rtification
12. S					
12. S	ed significance of	this property within the s			
12. S The evaluate As the desig 665), I hereby	ed significance of national nated State Histo y nominate this p		local or the National HIst ne National Register ne Heritage Conserv	r and certify that it has I	f 1966 (Public Law 89- been evaluated
12. S The evaluate As the desig 665), I hereby according to	ed significance of national nated State Histo y nominate this p	this property within the s X_state pric Preservation Officer for roperty for inclusion in the procedures set forth by the	local or the National Hist ne National Register	r and certify that it has I	f 1966 (Public Law 89- been evaluated
12. S The evaluate As the desig 665), I hereby according to State Histori	ed significance of national nated State Histo y nominate this p the criteria and p c Preservation Of	this property within the s X_state pric Preservation Officer for roperty for inclusion in the procedures set forth by the	local or the National Hist ne National Register ne Heritage Conserv Mm Im	r and certify that it has I vation and Recreation S	f 1966 (Public Law 89- been evaluated
12. S The evaluate As the desig 665), I hereby according to State Historic title Direct For HCRS	ed significance of national nated State Histo y nominate this p the criteria and p c Preservation Of ctor, Connect use only	this property within the s <u>X</u> state ric Preservation Officer for roperty for inclusion in the procedures set forth by the fficer signature	local or the National Hist ne National Register ne Heritage Conserv Commission	r and certify that it has I vation and Recreation S date Feb	f 1966 (Public Law 89- been evaluated ervice.
12. S The evaluate As the desig 665), I hereby according to State Historic title Direct For HCRS I hereb	ed significance of national nated State Histo y nominate this p the criteria and p c Preservation Of ctor, Connect use only	this property within the s <u>×</u> state ric Preservation Officer for roperty for inclusion in the procedures set forth by the fficer signature ficut Historical Co property is included in the gyesses	local or the National Hist ne National Register ne Heritage Conserv May In ommission he National Register Entered in	r and certify that it has I vation and Recreation S date Feb	f 1966 (Public Law 89- been evaluated ervice.

FHR-8-300 (11-78) (11/78) United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Weatherstone, Sharon, CT.Item number8Page1Continuation sheetSignificanceItem number8Page1

"First Medical Society in the Thirteen United States of America since Their Independence."²

Also, during these years the great open third floor of Weatherstone³ was used as a substitute for a public hall and was the scene of school functions and village entertainments. The storage capability of the third floor space made possible the accumulation of an extraordinary collection of family and other historical papers that furnished the material for Helen Evertson Smith's⁴ book, <u>Colonial Days & Ways</u>, that describes the society of the late 18th century, and, in part, for volumes 25 through 31 of the <u>Collections of</u> The Connecticut Historical <u>Society</u>, which are the papers of Governor John Cotton Smith.

In the post-Revolutionary War period Simeon Smith's financial affairs became encumbered, and in 1787 he found it advisable to leave Connecticut. Before doing so he turned Weatherstone over to his brother, the Rev. Cotton Mather Smith, under an arrangement whereby Cotton Mather Smith became responsible for some of Simeon Smith's debts. Simeon Smith removed to West Haven, Vermont, where he had 25,000 acres that did not fall into the hands of his creditors⁵ and began to rebuild his career. He did so successfully, and, having paid off all his debts, died in 1804, again a wealthy man.⁶

At Weatherstone, the Rev. Cotton Mather Smith's son, John Cotton Smith (1765-1845), prepared for Yale which he entered at age 14, and from which he graduated in 1783. A brilliant lawyer, he served in the House of Representatives of the Connecticut legislature in 1793 and from 1796 to 1800, holding the office of Speaker in 1799 and 1800. He was a strong supporter of the old Federal party, and, a bulwark of antidisestablishmentarianism, steadfastly opposed demands for a new Constitution. He then served in the United States Congress as a representative for six years, returning to Sharon in 1806 "to administer to the comfort of an aging father."' A rapid rise in the state hierarchy followed. The year 1809 found him again Speaker of the Connecticut House, and in the same year he became the first judge of the Superior Court and then Lieutenant Governor. In 1812 he began four years as Governor of Connecticut. Opposed to the War of 1812 and in favor of Connecticut representation in the Hartford Convention, he was defeated in the election of 1817 by the anti-Feder list forces led by Oliver Wolcott, Jr. from nearby Litchfield. In 1818 a new Constitution was adopted by the State of Connecticut that disestablished the Congregational Church, broadened the franchise, and generally brought an end to the old regime and Standing Order of which John Cotton Smith was the symbol and final leader.

At the age of 52 the ex-Governor returned to his 1,000 acre farm in Sharon to spend the last 28 years of his life as "the most eminent citizen of the town."⁸ Yale University conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws upon him; the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions elected him president in 1826; he became first president of the Connecticut Bible Society; and in 1836 he became a member of the Royal College of Northern Antiquarians of Copenhagen. He continued to support the church and the way of life for which he stood.

After the Governor died in 1845, ownership of the Homestead passed from generation to generation of his descendants until 1915. The Governor's son, William Mather Smith, lived in the house until he died in 1864. Then William Mather's son, Robert Worthington Smith, was the owner to 1877. In 1877 the house was inherited by Robert Worthington Smith's three children, Gilbert Livingston Smith, 2nd (1835-1915), Helen Evertson Smith (1839-1921),

FHR-8-300 (11-78) (11/78)

Weatherstone, Sharon, CT.

Continuation sheet

United States Department of the Interior Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

Significance

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



and Gertrude Smith Geer. During these years few changes were made to the structure, although one change that was made, in the custom of the era, was the addition of a raised, one-story front porch the full width of the front of the house (Figure 11). Helen Evertson Smith recorded the history of the house in her book, <u>Colonial Days & Ways</u>, and in the volume entitled <u>The Governor Smith Homestead</u> that she prepared for the series of manuscript histories of early Connecticut homes sponsored by the Connecticut Society of Colonial Dames of America.

Item number

8

After the death of Gilbert Livingston Smith, 2nd in 1915 the property was purchased by Stuart Jones. Jones promptly held an auction at which the furniture and furnishings accumulated by five generations of the Smith family were disposed of.¹⁰ Jones engaged the New York architectural firm of Trowbridge and Livingston¹¹ to carry out important alterations that included filling in the ground on the south, adding the doorway and lengthening the first-floor windows on the north elevation, extending the kitchen wing, and re-locating the stairway to the second floor on the new transverse hall. In 1922, Trowbridge and Livingston replaced the existing farm buildings with the present group of seven Colonial Revival clapboard structures.

After Jones' death in 1935, the house was owned for two years by Philip Hofer, curator of the department of printing and graphic arts at the Houghton Library, Harvard University. Hofer added the dining room bay window, and also built the retaining wall and terrace across the front of the house that obscured the theretofore visible exterior basement wall of the facade (Figure 12). Hofer sold in 1938 to Bryon Stookey, a prominent New York City neurosurgeon. It was during Stookey's stewardship that the name Weatherstone was given to the house, and the Jacobean library was installed. A. S. Marlow purchased the house in 1963.

In 1968 the Homstead was acquired by John Hutchings Spencer, a descendant of Juliana Smith, daughter of the Rev. Cotton Mather Smith and sister of the Governor, thus returning the house to ownership by the Smith family. In the past decade several steps have been taken to restore the 18th-century character of the house. The retaining wall and terrace across the front have been removed, again revealing the exterior basement wall, and the dual, curved stairs from grade to the front door were built, thereby reestablishing the importance and function of the main entrance. Another step in the restoration was the removal of a stone-like aggregate that had been applied over the brick window surrounds to conceal them with what appeared to be a continuation of the stone wall. In doing so, it was discovered that the brick sills extend to become string courses of brick, now visible in the facade. In 1976-1978 several of the farm buildings (the garage, dormitory, and in part the barn) were converted to residential use.¹²

The great stone Georgian house built by Simeon Smith, M.D., before the Revolutionary War, continues to look out over the Sharon green from its elevated site, significant for its architecture, its spacious grounds and farm buildings, and its associations. In addition to being an architectural landmark, the house is a symbol of the final days of the relationship of church and state that prevailed in the colony of Connecticut for almost 200 years from its settlement in the 1630's to the reform constitution of 1818.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form



Weatherstone, Sharon, CT.

Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

3

1. Smith, Colonial Days & Ways, p. 23.

Significance

- 2. Smith, Colonial Days & Ways, p. 331.
- 3. The third floor is now divided into four bedrooms.
- 4. Jöhn Cotton Smith married Margaret Evertson. One of their descendants was Helen Evertson Smith.
- 5. Smith, Colonial Days & Ways.
- 6. Simeon Smith built a second large house in Vermont designed by William Spratts, the architect who earlier lived in nearby Litchfield, Connecticut, the town of Oliver Wolcott, Jr., who was to defeat John Cotton Smith at the polls in 1817.
- 7. Norton, p. 145.
- 8. Benton, p. 458.
- 9. The treatment of the facade prior to this front porch is not documented.
- 10. At least two items from the house, a bedstead and a mirror, subsequently found their way into the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.
- 11. S. B. Parkman Trowbridge and Goodhue Livingston began their joint practice in 1901, Highly successful, the firm was noted for a number of bank commissions, including The Bankers Trust Co., J. P.Morgan & Co., and the Chemical National Bank. See Withey, pp. 606-607.
- 12. The Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service applauded the rehabilitation of the buildings, characterizing it as "a very sensitive approach to preserving the rural and agricultural context of the estate while allowing for a change in the use of the property." (Letter, Technical Preservation Services Division, HCRS, to John Hutchings and Harriet Goss Spencer, November 1, 1979.)

FHR-8-300A (11/78) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Weatherstone Sharon, CT

CONTINUATION SHEET Bibliography ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

Myron B. Benton, "The Rose of Sharon," <u>Connecticut Magazine</u>, v. 5, no. 9 (September, 1899).

Collections of the Connecticut Historical Society, v. 25 (1948) through v. 31 (1967), <u>Smith Papers</u>, papers of John Cotton Smith while Lieutenant Governor, Acting Governor and Governor of Connecticut.

Marion Harland (pseud., Mary Virginia Terhune), <u>Some Colonial</u> <u>Homesteads</u>, New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1899.

New York Times, November 14, 1979, p. Cl, V6.

Frederick Calvin Norton, <u>The Governors of Connecticut</u>, Hartford: The Connecticut Magazine, 1895.

Sara Emerson Rolleston, <u>Heritage House</u>, New York: The Viking Press, 1979.

Charles F. Sedgwick, <u>General History of the Town of Sharon</u>, second edition, Amenia, New York: Charles Walsh, 1877.

Sharon Historic District Study Committee Report, March, 1975.

Helen Evertson Smith, <u>Colonial Days & Ways</u>, New York: The Century Co., 1900.

, <u>The Governor Smith Homestead</u>, Connecticut Society of Colonial Dames in Connecticut, 1913, with added notes by Byron Stookey, 1958, and Caroline B. Hart, 1965.

Rev. Ulysses Grant Warren, <u>Picturesque and Historic Sharon</u>, New York: Blumberg Press, 1904.

Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, <u>Biographical Dictionary</u> of <u>American Architects (Deceased)</u>, Los Angeles: <u>Hennessey & Ingalls</u>, Inc., 1970 (facsimile of 1956 edition).

Charles F. Sedgwick, <u>General History of the Town of Sharon</u>, second edition, Amenia, New York; <u>Charles Walsh</u>, 1877.

FOR HCRS USE ONLY RECEIVED FEB 2.3 1982 DATE ENTERED

Picture 11 Teatherstone Sharon, SP



1921-CINEURY PRONT POLCH Carren, p. 54



THE GOVERNOR SMITH HOMESTEAD. A neuro monteers were lined and British and Ressian officers imprisoned here when Burgoyne's array marched through Sharon as prisoners of war.

Pigare 12 Neatherstore Sharon, C2

20TH-CENTURY (ALL AND TERRAC) IN PROOF OF FACADO Sharon Historic District Study Committee Report, No. 75.









