

**HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY
BUILDING AND STRUCTURES**

HIST-6 REV. 6/83

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION

59 SOUTH PROSPECT STREET, HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106
(203) 566-3005

Rec'd No. 10

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
Town No.:	Site No.: (20)
UTM	
QUAD:	
DISTRICT	IF NR, SPECIFY
<input type="checkbox"/> S <input type="checkbox"/> NR	<input type="checkbox"/> Actual <input type="checkbox"/> Potential

IDENTIFICATION

1. BUILDING NAME (Common)		(Historic)	
NA		Willard Homestead	
2. TOWN/CITY	VILLAGE	COUNTY	
Newington	NA	Hartford	
3. STREET AND NUMBER (and/or location)			
372 Willard Avenue			
4. OWNER(S)			
Joan Alice Taylor <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private			
5. USE (Present)		(Historic)	
Single-family residential		Single-family residential	
6. ACCESSIBILITY TO PUBLIC:	EXTERIOR VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC ROAD	INTERIOR ACCESSIBLE	IF YES, EXPLAIN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		

DESCRIPTION

7. STYLE OF BUILDING		DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	
Colonial		c. 1730	
8. MATERIAL(S) (Indicate use or location when appropriate)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clapboard	<input type="checkbox"/> Asbestos Siding	<input type="checkbox"/> Brick	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) wide board sheathing (east elevation)
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> Asphalt Siding	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fieldstone	foundation -(rear ell)
<input type="checkbox"/> Board & Batten	<input type="checkbox"/> Stucco	<input type="checkbox"/> Cobblestone	
<input type="checkbox"/> Aluminum Siding	<input type="checkbox"/> Concrete Type: _____	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cut stone Type: brownstone foundation	
9. STRUCTURAL SYSTEM			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wood frame	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Post and beam	<input type="checkbox"/> balloon	
<input type="checkbox"/> Load bearing masonry		<input type="checkbox"/> Structural iron or steel	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____			
10. ROOF (Type)			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gable	<input type="checkbox"/> Flat	<input type="checkbox"/> Mansard	<input type="checkbox"/> Monitor <input type="checkbox"/> sawtooth
<input type="checkbox"/> Gambrel	<input type="checkbox"/> Shed	<input type="checkbox"/> Hip	<input type="checkbox"/> Round <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
(Material)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Wood Shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> Roll Asphalt	<input type="checkbox"/> Tin	<input type="checkbox"/> Slate
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Asphalt shingle	<input type="checkbox"/> Built up	<input type="checkbox"/> Tile	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____
11. NUMBER OF STORIES	APPROXIMATE DIMENSIONS		
2 1/2	32 x 36, with a 21 x 22 rear ell		
12. CONDITION (Structural)		(Exterior)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated
<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated
13. INTEGRITY (Location)		WHEN ?	(Alterations)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On original site	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
			windows altered, exterior sandblasted
14. RELATED OUTBUILDINGS OR LANDSCAPE FEATURES			
<input type="checkbox"/> Barn	<input type="checkbox"/> Shed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Garage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other landscape features or buildings (Specify) old dairy (converted to residence); mature trees and shrubs frame the residence.
<input type="checkbox"/> Carriage house	<input type="checkbox"/> Shop	<input type="checkbox"/> Garden	
15. SURROUNDING ENVIRONMENT			
<input type="checkbox"/> Open land	<input type="checkbox"/> Wood-land	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Residential	<input type="checkbox"/> Scattered buildings visible from site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Indus-trial	<input type="checkbox"/> Rural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> High building density

16. INTERRELATIONSHIP OF BUILDING AND SURROUNDINGS
Occupies a 3-acre parcel on a busy thoroughfare. Adjacent are an apartment building (south) and small residences (north and east). Open land across the street is slated for commercial development.

(OVER)

DESCRIPTION (Continued)

17. OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES OF BUILDING OR SITE (interior and/or exterior)

This large, 2 1/2-story, 5-bay, rectangular center chimney Colonial is 2 bays deep and has a sizeable, 2-story, 2-bay deep ell projecting from its rear, northeast corner (see Photographs #6-10 attached).

Its foundation is brownstone ("dry", without mortar, on 3 sides) and fieldstone (the ell). Both the main and ell roofs are pitched gable; that of the ell has a broader pitch. The house is sheathed in clapboards, all of which are recently sandblasted; the rear (east) elevation of the main block, however, is sheathed in wide, 12" weatherboards. There is a slight overhang between the floors. It appears that the original windows were 12/8, double hung sash, of which the only survivors now are the attic windows in each main gable peak. The other windows now are either 2/2 or 6/6 (in the ell). The window frames are flat except for those in the ell, which have projecting sills. (continued)

18. ARCHITECT

unknown

BUILDER

unknown

19. HISTORICAL OR ARCHITECTURAL IMPORTANCE

The Willard Homestead is a fine, mostly intact, example of a mid-18th-century, center chimney Colonial residence, which gives it considerable architectural importance. Some of its features are unusual for a house of this period, which adds to its importance. The Homestead is also historically significant because of its associations with the Willard family, who were early settlers of Newington and long prominent in its affairs, and with James Gilbert, Newington's First Selectman from 1922 to 1940.

Though altered to some extent, the Willard Homestead presents all of the best characteristics of a center chimney Colonial: tall and large chimney; clapboard sheathing; 5-bay facade; coffin door; and a textbook floor plan. The alteration of the window glazing pattern and changing a few interior walls to a limited extent have not changed these essentials. The rear ell, too, may well be a later addition (its 6/6 glazing and the interior structural framework of the house suggest this), but it is entirely (continued)

SIGNIFICANCE

SOURCES

Baxter, Elizabeth S., Centennial History of Newington (1971).

Kelly, J. Frederick, Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut (1924, reprinted in 1963)

Interview with the owner, Joan Alice Taylor, September 1985.

PHOTO	PHOTOGRAPHER	Gregory E. Andrews	DATE	Sept. 1985	Place Photograph Here
	VIEW	see accompanying photographs	NEGATIVE ON FILE	CHC	
COMPILED BY	NAME	Gregory E. Andrews	DATE	9/23/85	
	ORGANIZATION				
	ADDRESS	1643 Boulevard, West Hartford, CT 06107			

20. SUBSEQUENT FIELD EVALUATIONS

21. THREATS TO BUILDING OR SITE

<input type="checkbox"/> None known	<input type="checkbox"/> Highways	<input type="checkbox"/> Vandalism	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Developers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other	Commercial and residential encroachments nearby
<input type="checkbox"/> Renewal	<input type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> Deterioration	<input type="checkbox"/> Zoning	<input type="checkbox"/> Explanation	

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL COMMISSION

59 South Prospect Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM

For Buildings and Structures

Willard Homestead
Newington, CT

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

Item number 17 Date: 9/23/85

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY			
TOWN NO.:	SITE NO.:		
UTM: 18 / - / - / - / - / -			
QUAD:			
DISTRICT:	S	NR:	ACTUAL POTENTIAL

The prominent feature of the facade is the main entrance, composed of paired 4-paneled doors set within a simple frame, with a beaded edge. The latch on this door is large, unusual in its design, and appears to be original. The south elevation has a front corner, 6-panel "coffin" door that has an identical latch. On the rear elevation is one exterior door, which appears to be later in date because of its frame and paneling design. Two doors are also located in the south elevation of the rear ell. A chimney stack rises above the rear ell near the juncture of the main and ell roofs (another stack in the ell is now altered and cut off below the roofline).

The interior, like the exterior, appears mostly intact. The floor plan is typical of early to mid-18th-century houses: large center chimney with 4 flues; a passage at the front entrance connecting a keeping room (southwest corner) and a parlor (northwest corner); and a large kitchen in the rear (now used as the dining room, which is flanked by a small bedroom (the "borning room") on the south and a "buttery" (converted into a bathroom). Between the kitchen/dining room and the buttery is a rear stairway. Above the 1st-floor rooms are bedchambers of approximately the same size and shape as those on the floor below. The ell contains a kitchen (adjacent to the main house) and a large unfinished area (thought, by the present owner, formerly to have been the dairy).

The 4 fireplaces are located in the keeping room, parlor, kitchen/dining room and southwest bedchamber. The doors throughout the house are virtually all 4-paneled, although those leading to the ell from the main house are composed of flush boards with battens. The original wide pine floor boards are in place with the exception of the kitchen/dining room, which has narrower floor boards that date from soon after an early 20th-century fire. Door and window frames are molded; those in the parlor are more elegant than elsewhere. The hardware is a mixture of old and new: many likely original "HL" hinges survive. The long "arrowhead" strap hinges on the front doors are original. Hand-wrought nails hold them in place; these nails are much in evidence. All of the rooms have cornice and baseboard molding. Summer beams on the first and second floors are encased in beaded wood boxes.

The passage hall features a right-handed, half-turn stairway with two landings. The detailing of the stairway is typical of the late 18th century. Its newel and balusters are simple and square, and the balusters are set diagonally on the treads. The molded treads are returned against the string and have decorative, applied, molded brackets.

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HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM

For Buildings and Structures Willard Homestead,
Newington, CT

CONTINUATION SHEET #2

Item number 17 Date: 9/23/85

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY			
TOWN NO.:	SITE NO.:		
UTM: 18/	/	/	/
QUAD:			
DISTRICT:	S	NR:	ACTUAL POTENTIAL

The keeping room has a large fireplace with a shallow firebox, molded surround and a high molded mantelpiece. The woodwork is typical of the second half of the 18th century. To the left of the fireplace is a large closet with a 2-part door. To the right and above the fireplace is a small cupboard that is known in the owner's family as the "jelly cupboard."

The centerpiece of the kitchen/dining room is the very large fireplace. The wall above the firebox is paneled, and flanking it are fluted panels that resemble pilasters. This detailing appears to date from 1775-1800. The approximately 7½-foot(wide) by 5½-foot(high) dimensions of this fireplace reputedly make it the largest of its period in Newington. At the rear of the firebox is a large baking oven, together with a square opening that is about 9 inches deep. The hearth is paved with modern replacement tiles. The original wall between this room and the keeping room is now removed, creating a 4-foot opening. The south wall of this room also was moved, thereby decreasing the size of the adjacent "borning" room and making this room bigger.

The parlor fireplace has a molded surround, a frieze with a row of clustered fluting, and a large mantel supported by small, curved and pierced brackets. The fourth fireplace, located above the keeping room in the southwest bedchamber, has a simple molded surround, no mantelpiece, and 2 large paneled closets above and to either side of the hearth.

The attic has a complete, wide board floor and heavy, rough hewn half-log framing. Beside the chimney stack is a smoke oven.

A 1-story, 3-bay, c.1920 garage lies to the northeast of the house. It is sheathed in weatherboards(beveled, and known locally as "novelty siding") and has exposed rafters under the hipped roof. To the southeast of the house is another c.1920 building that is built into a rise of ground so that it is 1-story high in front and a full 2 stories in the rear. Its principal features are a pitched gable roof, exposed rafters and novelty siding. A vehicular entrance in the facade(north elevation) projects slightly under a shed roof that breaks the main gable.

Acreage: approximately 3

UTM Reference: H 18/688390/4619700

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HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY FORM

For Buildings and Structures

Willard Homestead,

Newington, CT

Item number: 19 Date: 9/23/85

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY			
TOWN NO.:		SITE NO.:	
UTM: 18	/	/	/
QUAD:			
DISTRICT:	S	NR:	ACTUAL
			POTENTIAL

compatible as either an original feature or later change.

While not entirely clear, the age of the Homestead may be determined with some accuracy from its features. Several key elements tend to confirm the date of 1732 that was, reached, after some research, by the family of the present owner. The size of the central chimney and the location of the baking oven at the rear of the firebox; the existence of 5 windows, not more or less, in the gable end elevations, and only 1 window in the gable peak; and the appearance of summer beams in the rooms on both main floors are all items of evidence that J. Frederick Kelly, Early Domestic Architecture of Connecticut, discuss as signs of a pre-1750 house. Most center chimney houses in Connecticut, according to Kelly, are also of this vintage.

Several distinctive features of the Homestead add much to its value. The door latches on the front entrance and coffin doors are unusual and feature a teardrop design with spiral ends. It is uncommon, furthermore, to have pierced brackets in a mantelpiece of this period. Kelly suggests, in addition, that stairway alusters set diagonally in the treads are especially unique. Attic smoke ovens are characteristic typically of only more elaborate 18th-century houses (Kelly, p. 77).

The acreage on which the Homestead is located came into the Willard family as part of the first general distribution of land grants by the Town of Wethersfield in 1670 in what is modern Newington. The property remained in family hands until the mid-19th century. During their ownership, the Willards were prominent members of the community. Josiah Willard, who lived in this house with his father, Simon Willard, was the first clerk of Newington Parish (1716), and he is credited with first using the name "Newington" for this young parish in its records (1718). Both Josiah Willard and a later resident of the Homestead, Daniel Willard III, were longtime teachers at the North District School in Newington Junction. Town records demonstrate that members of the Willard family occupied many positions of responsibility in parish affairs.

James and Alice Holt Gilbert bought the Homestead in 1916. Mr. Gilbert served as the town's First Selectman for 18 years (1922-1940), during which time the Homestead's borning room was his office and de facto town headquarters. The property has remained in the Gilbert family since that time.