

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet 65

Item number 7

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NAME: John R. Waterman House  
LOCATION: 100 Old Homestead Road  
OWNERS: Mr. and Mrs. William Naughton  
100 Old Homestead Road  
Warwick, R.I. 02889  
CONDITION: Excellent; Altered; Original Site

## DESCRIPTION:

The John R. Waterman House is set on a large lot backing up to a wooded area along Lockwood Brook in a suburban residential neighborhood containing mostly twentieth-century houses. It is a rectangular, two-and-one-half-story, gable-roofed, timber-framed, shingle-clad structure with paired brick interior chimneys, a fieldstone foundation, a side porch, and a rear ell connecting to a two-car garage. The property also contains a small barn or carriage house northwest of the house. The house has a five-bay facade (south side) with a central doorway flanked by fluted pilasters and topped by a transom with Gothic-arch leading set between consoles supporting a shelf-like hood. The main entrance opens into a central entry and stair hall which runs half way through the house. To the left and right are a dining room and a parlor, respectively. Both rooms have one-story Federal mantels on the fireplaces and interior shutters; the parlor also has a dado topped with a band of reeding and a reeded frieze around the top on one wall. The entry/stair hall opens into a hall with a back staircase. To the left is a large room now used as a family room and dining area connecting to a kitchen which runs behind the back stair hall. The rear ell, containing one room with the rear entrance on its west side, runs off the back (north side) of the family room. The northeast corner of the house, to the right off the back stair hall, is subdivided into two rooms. The second floor has four bedrooms, and a bathroom located over the kitchen. All the bedrooms have fireplaces with simple single-story, pilastered mantels; the mantel in the northeast bedroom is the most interesting, with a crude pine-tree design gouged into the shallow impost blocks above the pilasters. A feature visible in the attic is Roman-numeral-like markings on the rafters and purlins, apparently reflecting the use of a numbering system by the housewright to make sure the timbers were fitted together properly.

PERIOD: 1800-1899  
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE: Architecture, Education, Politics/Government  
SPECIFIC DATE: ca 1800  
BUILDER/ARCHITECT: Unknown

(See Continuation Sheet #66)

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**SIGNIFICANCE:**

The John R. Waterman House is an outstanding example of Federal domestic architecture which is associated with the life of one of Warwick's foremost historical figures. It is exceptional among the other surviving structures of its period in the city, for its well preserved interior decoration is more elegant and refined than that of Warwick's average Federal dwelling, and its commodious plan with paired chimneys and central front hall is unusual if not unique in the city. Most of the community's Federal dwellings adhere to the Colonial center-chimney plan with a tiny entry/stairhall in front of the chimney.) Historically the property is noteworthy for being the residence of John R. Waterman, a well-to-do-gentleman farmer and politician who was one of the most progressive men in early nineteenth-century Rhode Island. Waterman first entered the General Assembly as representative from Warwick in 1810 and was elected to the state senate in 1821. Waterman supported the establishment of a free public school system in the state, drafting a bill for that purpose in 1824. The bill did not pass, but substantial portions of it were incorporated in the 1828 public education bill enacted by the Assembly. Waterman was also a proponent of free suffrage unrestricted by property-ownership requirements. He supported Thomas W. Dorr, champion of the rights of the state's working-class residents, and served as Warwick's representative at the 1841 convention that drafted the "People's Constitution," a relatively liberal document devised to replace the restrictive charter of 1663 under which Rhode Island's government then operated. The Waterman House is the chief memorial to the prominent man who was its first resident.

ACREAGE: 1.35 acres

QUADRANGLE NAME: East Greenwich, R.I.

UTM: 19 300760 4621380

**BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION:**

The nominated property is coextensive with lot 147 in Assessor's Plat 330, as defined by the City of Warwick, and measures 1.35 acres. This parcel encompasses the cultural resource and its immediate surroundings.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: LOCAL

(See Continuation Sheet #67)