

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER :	DATE
	MAR 2 1976

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Jamestown Windmill

AND/OR HISTORIC:

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
North Road, 0.1 mile north of Weeden Lane

CITY OR TOWN:  
Jamestown

STATE: Rhode Island, 02835      CODE: 44      COUNTY: Newport      CODE: 005

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
Jamestown Historical Society

STREET AND NUMBER:  
C/o Mrs. J. H. N. Potter, 131 Narragansett Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Jamestown      STATE: Rhode Island, 02835      CODE: 44

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Town Clerk

STREET AND NUMBER:  
71 Narragansett Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Jamestown      STATE: Rhode Island, 02835      CODE: 44

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1958       Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Independence Avenue and 1st Street, S. E.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington      STATE: District of Columbia      CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:  
COUNTY:  
ENTRY NUMBER  
DATE

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

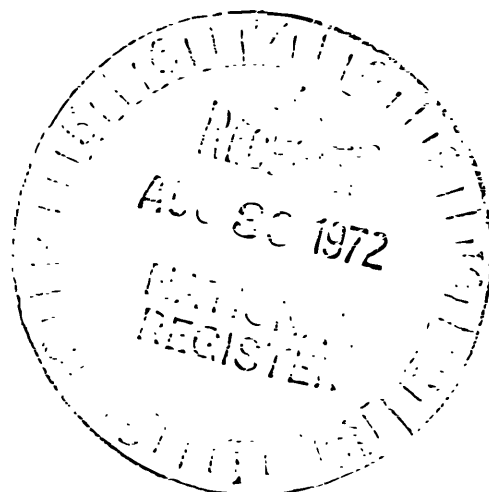
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Jamestown Windmill, built in 1787, stands on high land on Conanicut Island, overlooking the East Passage of Narragansett Bay. Massively constructed of hand-hewn oak timbers diagonally braced, and placed on a rubble foundation, it is shingled on the outside. The corners are sheathed with vertical strips. In shape the mill is a three-story octagonal tower about 30 feet in height with a domed top or bonnet whose interior framing is umbrella-like. This bonnet carries the windshaft which holds the latticed wooden arms, or sweeps, and it is designed to turn on an iron track (the original track was of wood) so that the 25-foot vanes may be faced into the winds. (In earlier mills, the building rested on a post or pivot, and the whole structure was turned to face the wind.) A simple plank door with strap hinges opens at the south into the first floor, which is 20 feet wide. There is also a "back" door. The two granite grinding stones, 5½ feet in diameter, are in position under the driveshaft. A lever raises the upper stone by about ¼ inch for grinding, when the corn is poured between them through a trap-door and chute from the second floor. A crane device can lift the top stone away, when this is required, to be roughened by a set of sharp rods. The walls have exposed interior corner posts, studs, cross-braces, and sheathing. (Much of the wood, including elements of the extremely heavy grinding table, is a part of skillful restoration.)

Narrow stairs lead up to the second story, which provided storage for both corn and meal. The third floor is filled by the huge wheel that surrounds the windshaft. This wheel transmits the motion of the outdoor arms to the main shaft, a heavy, vertical post connected to the top grinding stone. The old wooden gears have been replaced with iron ones, and much of the wheel bracing has been rebuilt. The bonnet itself, which turns on a gear track connected to a large sprocketed wheel outside turned by pulling a continuous chain, has been repaired and resingled. Here, as in each of the three floors, tiny windows admit only enough light to see; the large wheel is a striking sight even in the semi-darkness. A frame of delicate arched wooden ribs supports the bonnet.

The windmill remained in use by the community until 1896. Restoration of the exterior was undertaken in 1957, and in 1960 restoration and repair of the mechanical and grinding works inside the building made them operable again.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century            |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1787

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry    |  | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  | _____                                    |

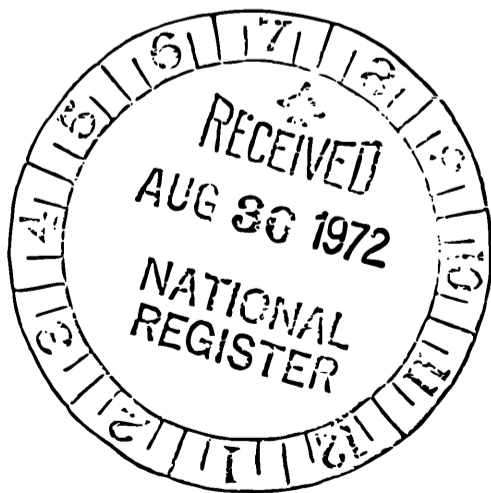
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Windmills of this type, once common and basic necessities, are now fast-disappearing, interesting examples of former ways of grinding grain. Believed to be the third windmill on Jamestown Island, this structure has stood (with the exception of repair and replacement when necessary) unchanged since 1787. It was then built with town appropriations, and later it came into the cooperative ownership of fourteen individual, local millers who used it. It is a good example of early civic endeavor to provide a public facility or utility, and it is a fine example also of early utilitarian architecture and early mechanical contrivance.

The mill remained in continual operation until 1896. Since that time it has been under the care, first, of the Windmill Society which in 1904 bought it to preserve it and--soon afterwards and since--of the Jamestown Historical Society. The windmill has been restored to operating condition largely through locally-gathered funds. Although the windshaft and vanes had to be replaced after severe hurricane damage, the millstones, gears, crane etc. are all original, as are most of the structure's timbers.

A picturesque landmark at all times, the building is open to the public during the summer season, giving opportunity to inspect the mechanism and operation of an early gristmill and the fine internal construction of this particular one.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Armbrust, Henry N., and others: The Old Jamestown Windmill (Jamestown, Rhode Island, 1964).  
 U. S. Works Progress Administration. Federal Writers' Project: Rhode Island. A Guide ... (Boston, Massachusetts, 1937), p. 430.  
The 1972 Rhode Island Yearbook (Providence, Rhode Island, 1972), pp. 54-55.

19130 2504507600  
 UTM 24E  
 12-11-72

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		41° 30' 59.55" N	71° 22' 26.28" W	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 0.1 acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: B. Christopher Bene, Surveyor-Researcher  
Richard B. Harrington, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission DATE: January 8, 1972

STREET AND NUMBER: State House, 90 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island, 02903 CODE: 44

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: Frederick C. Wilkinson

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: August 22, 1972

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Robert B. Hitt  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 3/14/73

ATTEST: [Signature]  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: 3.8.73