

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**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
Wentworth-Gardner House
AND/OR COMMON
Wentworth-Gardner House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN
Portsmouth
STATE
New Hampshire
VICINITY OF
CODE
COUNTY
Rockingham
CODE
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
NOT FOR PUBLICATION

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT
			<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL
			<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY
			<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Charles Dale
STREET & NUMBER
Wentworth-Gardner--Tobias Lear House Association
CITY, TOWN
Portsmouth
VICINITY OF
STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Rockingham County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN
STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
DATE
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Wentworth-Gardner House is a 2 1/2 story frame house with a hipped roof and dormers. Its plan is that of the standard, Georgian Center Hall/four-room plan, wherein each floor contains two rooms to either side of a stair hall with each room having access to one or the other of the house's two interior chimneys. An ell has been added to the Southwest side.

The north elevation of the Wentworth-Gardner House is particularly elaborate, featuring an ornate entrance, with a twelve-panelled door, and a classical surround created by flanking Corinthian pilasters on pedestals, capitals, a modillioned architrave, and an elegant gooseneck pediment with a pineapple in its center. The last feature is a well-known and widely-used Georgian symbol of hospitality.

The 9 over 9, thin-mullioned windows on the ground floor are capped by triangular pediments, while those on the upper floor are topped by flat lintels under the roof's modillioned cornice. The three dormers in the hipped roof feature a pair of triangular pediments flanking a segmental one. Windows are six over six.

The most striking feature of this elevation however is the attempt to imitate in wood the permanency and weight of a stone front. The broad clapboards have beveled edges, and are lined so as to appear to be pieces of stone. Very prominent wooden "quoins" stand at the corners. The remaining three sides of the house have the narrower, and standard, style of New England clapboarding.

The broad entrance hall to the Wentworth-Gardner House is a particularly striking, and altogether fitting introduction to the interior of this fine house. The finely-proportioned room features a graceful elliptical classical archway with prominent keystone and a pair of Doric columns bracing it at the walls. The rich cornice of the room is typical of the elaborate detailing throughout the house, featuring the whole classical repertoire, from modillion blocks to egg-and-dart mouldings.

Each of the rooms has a generous fireplace and panelled surroundings. The wooden cornices in every room and around all windows are part of rooms that also feature deeply-splayed window jambs to receive panelled, folding shutters, and old tile to face the fireplaces themselves. The chimneyfront in the ground floor's southeast room is the most elaborate one in the house, highlighted by full length Corinthian pilasters carrying a complete wooden entablature.

The stair to the upper floor rises from the left side of the entrance hall as one enters. It too is a highpoint of the house. It has alternating turned, twisted, and fluted ballusters of black cherry, a painted pine handrail, panelled scrolled step-ends, and a handsome newel post. The upper hall, to which the stair leads, is generally accepted as one of the most important in all of American-Georgian interiors for the completeness of its academic treatment, with an order of fluted Ionic pilasters bearing a moulded architrave, pulvinated frieze, modillioned cornice, and a plastered cove.

The Wentworth-Gardner House is today well-maintained, with a full-time caretaker living in the ell. The Wentworth-Gardner-Tobias Lear House Association owns the house, and retains it as a museum, open to the public.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Erected in 1760, the Wentworth-Gardner House is, as restored, an exceptional example of a late-Georgian New England frame dwelling. From its principal facade, featuring a most unusual and rather successful imitation of stone, to the extremely elaborate interiors which are said to have been worked over for some 14 months, the house presents an unusually sophisticated example of architectural achievement of this period. The house was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art with the intention of removing it to New York City. When this proved impractical for one reason or another, the house was restored and ultimately opened to the public by an association based in Portsmouth.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/2

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	9	3	5	7	5	0	0	4	7	7	0	3	0	0
ZONE		EASTING					NORTHING							

B

ZONE		EASTING					NORTHING						

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

See continuation sheet

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

J. Dillon

9-3-76

ORGANIZATION

National Park Service, Historic Sites Survey

DATE

523-5464

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street NW.

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE
D.C.

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

TITLE

DATE

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

DATE 11/3/83

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

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Wentworth-Gardner House

CONTINUATION SHEET Description ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

The house fronts on the water, with a wharf in front of it, and is surrounded by residential building of periods later than this old house. The great majority of the area of the square city block on which this house and the Tobias Lear House stand are owned by the one Portsmouth association. However, there is no important historical connection between either the Tobias Lear House or the accompanying outbuildings, or the subsequent Victorian period houses and therefore have no inclusion in the area of the National Historic Landmark.

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Wentworth-Gardner House

CONTINUATION SHEET Boundary ITEM NUMBER 10 PAGE 2

The Wentworth-Gardner House lot constitutes the official boundary of this National Historic Landmark. It consists of a roughly square parcel about 106 feet x 132 feet, bounded on the east by the west curb of a land (now Mechanic Street), generally 20 feet wide, (which runs from Marcy to South Mill Street). The lot is bounded on the north by the south curb of Gardner Street, and on the east and south side, the limits of the landmark property are defined by the lot lines of the adjacent properties. The total acreage of the site is approximately 14,200 square feet. No other structures contribute to the national significance of this landmark. The surrounding area is entirely residential, and within short walking distance of "Strawberry Banke," a collection of house museums of well known reputation.

