

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

For HCRS use only

received

date entered

1. Name

historic Plain Farm House

and/or common

2. Location

street & number 108 Webster Avenue _____ not for publication

city, town Providence _____ vicinity of congressional district #2, Edward J. Beard

state Rhode Island code 44 county Providence code 007

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 type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name William Beeman

street & number 108 Webster Avenue

city, town Providence _____ vicinity of state Rhode Island 02909

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Providence City Hall

street & number 25 Dorrance Street

city, town Providence _____ state Rhode Island 02903

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Providence Citywide Survey has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1975 et seq. _____ federal state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

city, town 150 Benefit Street, Providence _____ state Rhode Island 02903

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Plain Farm House is a two-and-a-half-story, wood-frame, clapboard-sheathed Federal farmhouse with a flank-gable roof and a two-story, gable-roof ell more or less centered on the rear of the main block (Photograph 1). The house is typical for the period in both construction and plan.

The symmetrical facade is five bays wide. The center entrance (Photograph 2) is articulated by narrow reeded pilasters which frame four-panel sidelights flanking the original six-panel door and supporting a semi-elliptical wooden fan above.¹ The fan is capped with a moulding and a large central keystone. Window frames throughout the house are of simple, pegged heavy-plank construction with slightly projecting drip caps above; windows on the main block are filled with original six-over-six sash, while those in the ell are two-over-two. The window frames on the second story abut the moulded cornice, and it is mitred around them.

The plan (See Continuation Sheet) of the main block is typical of the turn of the nineteenth century: the center hall extends half the depth of the house and is flanked by parlors on the front; two additional rooms are in either of the rear corners and are separated by an auxiliary staircase (probably added in the late nineteenth century) and a closet. Chimney stacks are placed between the front and rear rooms on either side of the house. The plan is identical on the second floor.

Interior detail is simple. The front staircase (Photograph 3) has a simple, turned newel post of mahogany; its handrail, also mahogany, is supported by unadorned one-inch square balusters of painted pine, spaced two to a step. The riser ends are decorated with a ninety-degree arched molding which connects the bottom of the riser with the rear of the tread; the stringer is a reeded half-round moulding (See Figure). Mantelpieces in the rear rooms and the northwest parlor on the first floor are simple, Federal examples with reeded pilasters. The mantel in the northeast parlor (Photograph 4) is more elaborate: narrow, engaged, three-quarter columns are applied on the front and sides of the mantelpiece, and these in turn support a fluted impost block which is below a fluted projecting panel. Simple, cymarecta chair rails surround all the rooms in the main block of the house, save for the northeast parlor, though ghosting on the window sills indicates that this room as well probably had wainscotting and a chair rail. All posts in the main block of the house are cased and beaded. Floors throughout the house are white pine planks, approximately ten inches wide.

The ell was probably added sometime in the early to middle years of the nineteenth century. Unlike the main block, it has no encased posts and its beams show signs of circular sawing.

¹Other examples of this particular form includes the Battey-Barden House on Plainfield Pike in Scituate and the Rudolphus B. Johnson House, 43 Miller Street, Warren

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

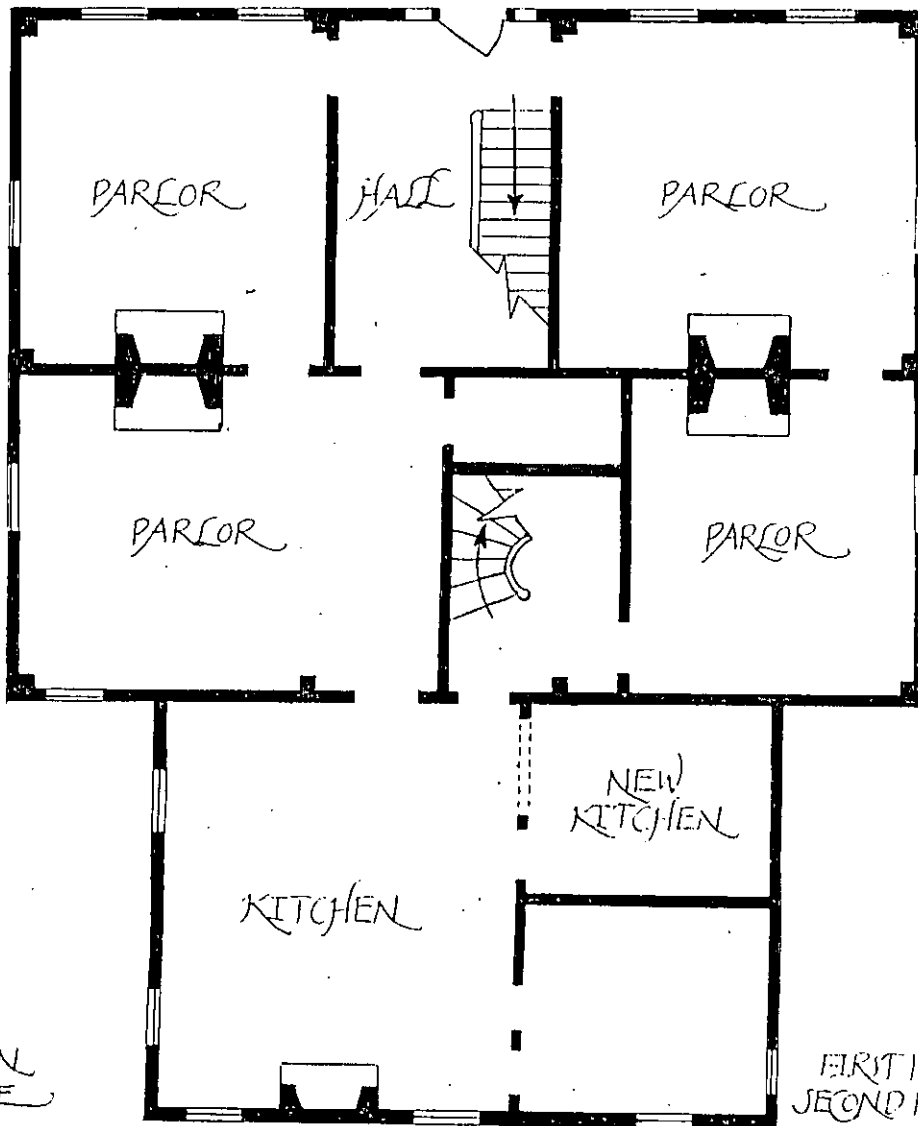
CONTINUATION SHEET

1

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

PLAIN FARM HOUSE
108 WEBSTER AVENUE
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND



SKETCH PLAN
NOT TO SCALE

FIRST FLOOR PLAN
SECOND FLOOR SIMILAR

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 type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" 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		<input type="checkbox"/> community-growth

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Plain Farm House is an architecturally important example of the late eighteenth/early nineteenth-century rural type, and its position in Providence's urban built fabric is indicative of the city's growth and transformation.

In its present, relatively unaltered, state, the house is a solid representative of the vernacular farmhouse type constructed throughout the state at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Its use of a large center hall with twin interior chimney stacks and of a wooden fan over the entrance indicate stronger Federal influences than usually found in farmhouses of the period.

Originally in the Town of Johnston (set off from Providence in 1759), Plain Farm House faces north toward Plainfield Street (originally Plainfield Pike, 1729, and later the Norwich Pike, established in 1803). It seems likely that the house was built soon after the opening of the Norwich Pike and possibly in direct response to this opening.¹ By the 1850s, the "Plain Farm Plat," owned by the West Providence Land Company, appears on several maps. Attempts were made to sell off portions of this farm, as well as adjacent land, for house lots in the 1860s, but the area was still too remote for successful marketing. Only in the late years of the nineteenth century did growth of the City of Providence create a demand for housing in this area: by the 1890s a number of two- and three-family houses were rising, and this portion of Johnston was reannexed to Providence in 1898. Today the house sits on a small lot, surrounded by a twentieth-century residential neighborhood.

¹Deed research has yielded no information previous to 1898; no cross-reference system for properties formerly in the Town of Johnston is used.

9. Major Bibliographical References

City of Providence, Tax Assessor's Records.

H.F. Walling, Map of the City of Providence, 1847.

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Providence

ACREEAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

1	9	2	9	6	4	6	0	4	6	3	1	5	5	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification:

Providence Tax Assessor's Plat 108, Lot 463

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 Wm. McKenzie Woodward/Senior Historic Preservation Planner

organization R.I. Historical Preservation Commission date April 1980

street & number 150 Benefit Street telephone (401) 277-2678

city or town Providence state Rhode Island 02903

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature Frederick Williams

title State Historic Preservation Officer date May 14, 1980

For HCERS use only

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

date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

Removed for Providence Book
8 November 1985
MMW

PLAIN FARM HOUSE
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

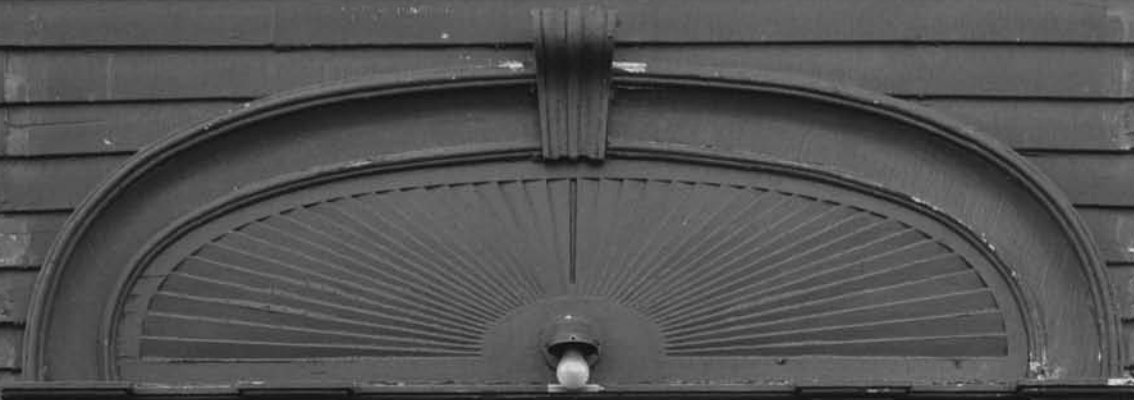
Photographer: Warren Jagger

Date: April, 1980

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

Plain Farm House, view from northeast

Photograph 1



PLAIN FARM HOUSE
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Photographer: Warren Jagger

Date: April 1980

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

Front Entrance

Photograph 2



PLAIN FARM HOUSE
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

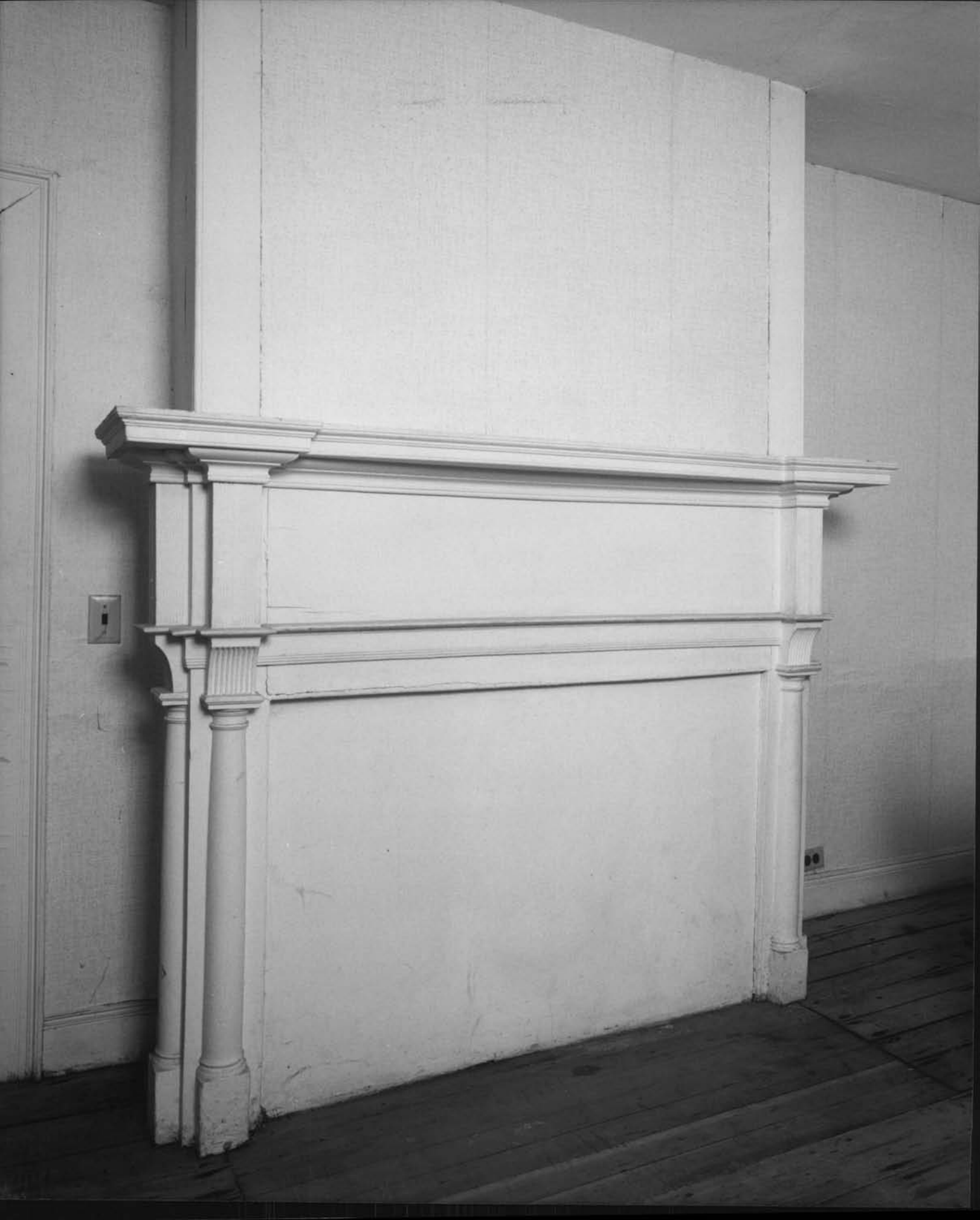
Photographer: Warren Jagger

Date: April 1980

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Front Hall

Photograph 3



PLAIN FARM HOUSE
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

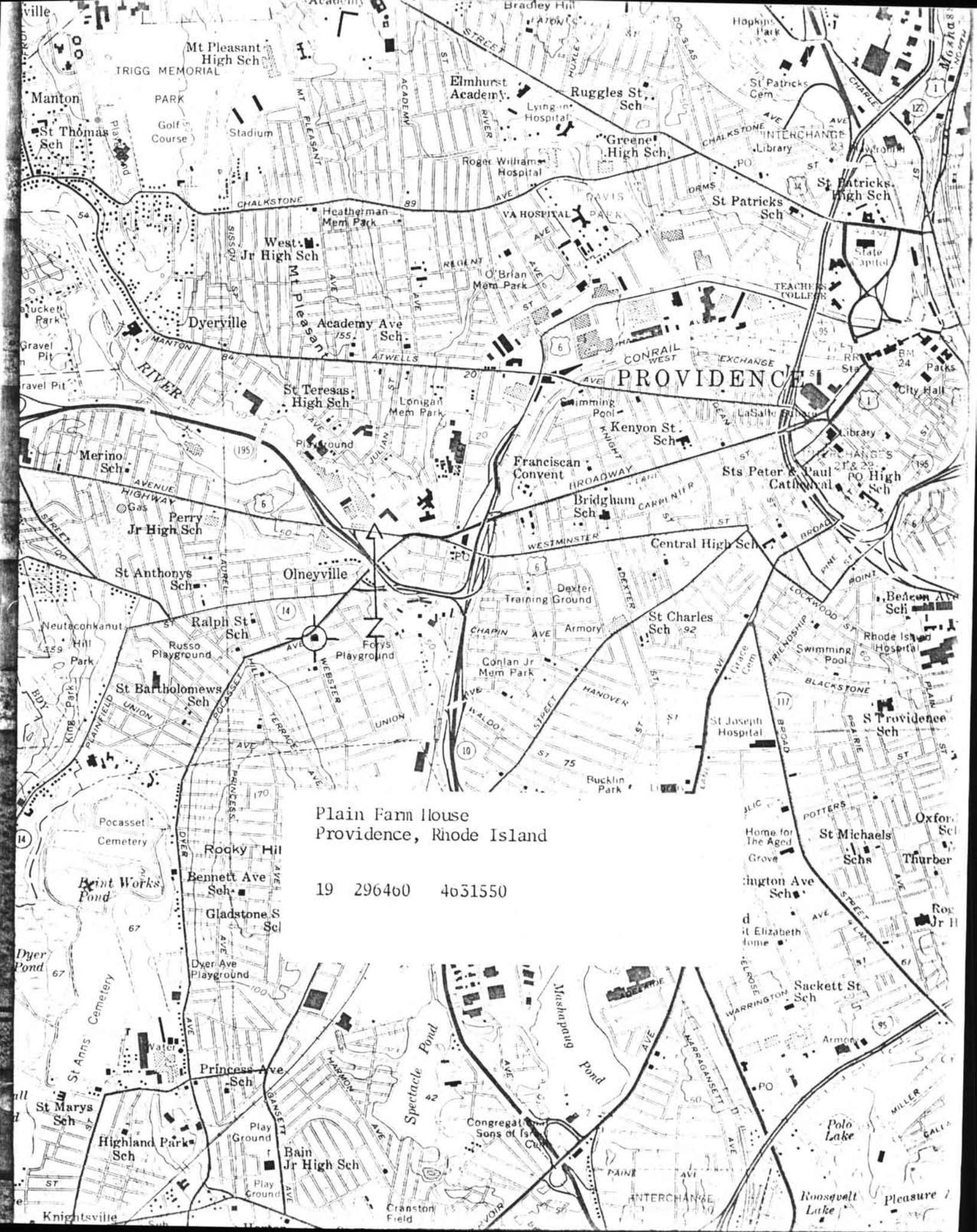
Photographer: Warren Jagger

Date: April 1980

Negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation
Commission

Mantelpiece, northeast parlor

Photograph 4



Plain Farm House
Providence, Rhode Island

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