

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
INTER-OFFICE MEMO

TO : Whom It May Concern

DATE: 1/30/80

DEPT :

FROM : Amelia Lynch

DEPT : National Register

SUBJECT: Greenvale Farm - NR Entry Publicity

The owner - Mr. Cortlandt Parker - has asked us not to provide any photographs (or specific location) of this property to the newspaper - Providence Journal or other - for reasons of security.

Do not hand out copies of this notification or photos. Please ask reporter to see me if any problems or questions.

Amelia

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

and/or common Greenvale Farm; Greenvale

2. Location

street & number 582 Wapping Road

not for publication

city, town Portsmouth

vicinity of

#1 Hon. Fernand J. St. Germain
congressional district

state Rhode Island

code 44

county Newport

code 005

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

4. Owner of Property

name James and Cortlandt Parker

street & number 582 Wapping Road

city, town Portsmouth

vicinity of

state Rhode Island

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Portsmouth Town Clerk

street & number 2200 East Main Road

city, town Portsmouth

state Rhode Island

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Historical & Architectural Resources of Portsmouth, Rhode Island:

title A Preliminary Report

has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

date 1979

☐ federal ☒ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

city, town 150 Benefit Street, Providence

state Rhode Island

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

Situated on a bluff on the rocky east shore of Aquidneck Island, overlooking the Sakonnet River,¹ Greenvale Farm comprises approximately 53 acres of woodland, corn fields, marsh and meadow.² The property became a country seat in the 1860s, when it was purchased and developed by John S. Barstow of Boston, a China-trade merchant who erected a large new house, stable and barn. He kept a pre-existing farmhouse for his farmer/caretaker. Still maintained as a country retreat by Barstow descendants, Greenvale's main house, stable and old farmhouse survive. Taken together -- land, buildings and history -- Greenvale Farm constitutes one of the most interesting and well preserved Victorian rural estates in Rhode Island.

Greenvale is in every sense a private -- almost a secret -- place (figures 1 & 2). It is entirely hidden from the public highway. A narrow, unpaved lane approaches the farm, east off Wapping Road. Straight and tree-lined, the gradually descending driftway crosses another farm³ before reaching Greenvale's gateposts, deep in the woods. The lane continues to descend with the land, soon passing on the north what in the nineteenth century became the estate's farmer/caretaker's house -- a modest, 2½-story, central-chimney, 5-bay-wide, Federal-era farmhouse (figure 3). Opposite, on the south side of the road in a heavy growth of shrubbery, are foundations of a barn and other agricultural outbuildings. At this point fields are visible on either side of the driftway, beyond the treeline. Farther down, on the south side of the lane, is a grassy path leading off to the stable-carriage house (figure 7). Here the land flattens out and the lane begins to turn south and, coming round a thicket and between several old shade trees, arrives at a second gate which, though evidently not closed for many years, served to separate Greenvale's farming area from the environs of the main house. The Barstow residence entrance-front faces north, and before it the drive encircles a lawn laid-out informally with plantings of rhododendrons, small trees and a pair of cast-iron settees. Upon entering the precinct of the house one first sees the water, initially through the trees, then, as one arrives at the house, in full view, across an expanse of meadow running 400 feet to the shoreside bluff. Opposite Greenvale Farm, on the east shore of the Sakonnet, is Little Compton, here little developed -- farms, woodland and clusters of summer houses on gently rolling hillside terrain.

¹The eastern reach of Narragansett Bay.

²The farm is designated lot 4 on Portsmouth Assessor's maps 65 and 67.

³Until 1852 Greenvale and the farm to the west were a single 100-acre property long known as Slocum Farm.

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Arriving at Greenvale Farm is an event marked by surprise and delight. It is a serial experience, beginning with the long descent through a neighboring farm and woods to an outer gate, traversing Greenvale's wooded, agricultural area (with occasional views across fields to the north and south), then entering by a second gate into the grounds of the main house which open out to embrace the vista across the Sakonnet River.

The principal element in the estate complex is the main house, which backs up to a dense woods on the southwest, west and northwest and opens out to vistas on the southeast, east and northeast. To the north is the drive and lawn. To the south was a garden, now planted as lawn and ending at a high treeline defining the south border of the estate. As built (figure 7), the house was surrounded by porches on its three principal elevations; only the westward projecting ell was left ungirdled. In consequence, the first-floor rooms were too dark for twentieth-century sensibilities and when the place was refurbished in 1918 (after decades of decay and vandalism) the porches were removed. This is the single major change to the building's exterior.

Nominally Gothic, this wood-frame house exemplifies what has come to be known as the "stick style" through the writings of Vincent Scully (see figures 4 through 7). Though the plan (figure 8) is quite rational, the exterior treatment is brashly picturesque. Each asymmetrical elevation appears to have been intended for viewing on the diagonal rather than head-on. The building is treated as a very large cottage--an out-sized, 1½-story dwelling, fragmented on each side into multiple units varied in form and projection and sheathed with clapboard,⁴ board-and-batten siding and mock half-timbering. The roof is a complex series of intersecting gable forms, with large dormers and cross gables accented by tall, pilastered chimney stacks and elaborated by a diaper pattern worked out in red and gray slates. The roof is brought down very low over the building. Jerkinheads, paneled vergeboards, and exposed, king-post bracing add to the enveloping quality

⁴The clapboard siding sheathes the first floor and was originally obscured by the encircling porch.

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of the angular, mantle-like roof. A somber, light-and-dark-grey color scheme tempers the exuberance of this exterior.⁵

Within, John Barstow's Portsmouth residence possesses a gracious scale defined by spaces arranged in a carefully ordered fashion that belies the whimsy of the exterior. Two concerns shaped the first- and second-story floor plans: provision of a good circulation pattern, horizontally and vertically, and appropriate disposition of the major rooms (see figure 8). Despite the complexities of the elevations, the basic form of the house is simple: two rectangles--the body of the house and the ell--set at right angle to each other. Running down the middle of each is a long corridor. In the service hall are the back stairs, basement stairs and back door. In the main hall are the front entrance, the main stairs, and, beneath the stairs, a minor entrance which opened onto the porch on the south side of the house. Front and back halls, separated by a door, connect opposite the parlor at the foot of the main staircase.

There are six rooms in the body of the first floor of the house, ranged three on either side of the hall. Five were rooms planned for use by the Barstow family. The sixth, though not small (at 15-by-15 feet), is the smallest and has the least important exposure;⁶ it is situated in the angle formed by the junction of the front and back halls. In every sense this room is subordinate, yet central: it was the maids' sitting room. Also for obvious reasons of function, the Barstow dining room (figure 14) is situated on the west side of the main hall, connecting with the pantry and rear hall. The third room on the west side of the front hall, at the northwest corner of the main body of the house, overlooking the entrance drive, is the so-called "music room,"⁷ probably originally intended to serve as an informal sitting room.

⁵This color scheme, working well with the gray and dull red slate roof, is probably close to the original treatment. Examination of porch posts, removed in 1918 from the exterior and reused in the basement as floor braces, reveals a muted gray-on-gray treatment.

⁶It overlooks the back porch and service entrance.

⁷The present title derives from the fact that a piano is located in the room now.

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On the opposite side of the main hall the billiard room (now known as the "trophy room"), library and parlor occupy the east front of the house. The billiard room, 24-by-18 feet and proportioned very like the table which once dominated this space, has a French door disguised as a double window at its north end which opened out to the porch; at the opposite end is the fireplace (figure 11). The library (figure 12) is the most unique room in the house, specially fitted up for its purpose and differentiated in form. It is an elongated octagon, with a single pair of French doors, opening onto the porch originally and onto a small terrace now, giving it light. Each of the other four principal rooms has its major axis parallel to the long axis of the main hall. In each, one enters at a corner, viewing the room diagonally at first, across the major axis. By contrast, the library's long axis is perpendicular to the hall; one enters on axis, playing up the water view out through the French doors which stand opposite the hall door. Appropriately, this major cross axis comes at the center of the house.

As the southeast exposure and view were the finest at the Barstow site, the most important room in the house, the parlor, was situated in its southeast corner (figures 8 and 13). The parlor is the largest room in the house, 27 by 17 feet. An expansive, semi-octagonal bay window on the parlor's east side is balanced by the fireplace on the west; the long axis to the south ends in a broad, triple window.

As one would expect, the form and finish of each room relates to its function; this is true of almost all Victorian houses. An atypical aspect of the Barstow house is that this particularity is emphasized by the discreteness of each space. There are no double parlors here, nor even a minor connecting door between rooms, nor broad doors to the hall. This cellularity makes the hall an uncommonly important space and it is treated accordingly. It is broad, yet very long, and is handsomely finished (figures 9 and 10). At its north end is an entrance vestibule set off by double doors and served by a coat closet. At its south end, beneath the stairs, is a vestibule serving the south door. It, too, is separated from the hall by a door; off this vestibule, beneath the staircase, is a water closet. The hall proper reads as a single space subtly divided into two zones--a long entrance corridor and a slightly wider stair hall (see figure 8). It has a beamed ceiling, dark, wood-paneled dado and stairwell, door casings and doors to match, and a Minton tile floor--a good choice for a space that received much traffic. In keeping with the exterior, the hall's

(See Continuation Sheet #4)

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design inspiration is gothic. The walls above the 3-foot dado are plaster, now painted off-white; the woodwork is a deep mahogany brown; the tile work, laid in a diagonal diaper pattern, is carried out in tones of chocolate brown and tan.

The maids' sitting room and family sitting room (now the music room) are square and modest in scale, appropriate to simple, conversational arrangements of furniture. Each room has a small closet; each has a simple marble mantelpiece.

The billiard room (figure 11), as noted, has proportions appropriate to the game it served. The room is provided with a large closet. The tile floor is carried out in shades of brown, tan, dull green and red. The mantel, like all throughout the house, is single-story. The billiard-room fireplace has a segmental-head firebox cased in soapstone. Its carved wood mantel of Renaissance Revival design has fluted pilasters fronting piers which terminate in volutes supporting a paneled frieze and moulded shelf.

The library's form, discussed earlier in terms of axis and vista, is carefully tuned to its function as a quiet gathering place. Though axial, the room has a centrality suggested by its octagonal shape and strongly accented fireplace (figure 12). It had built-in bookshelves (three survive) matching the elegant, paneled-and-carved Renaissance Revival mantel. The library woodwork is picked out with black banding and highlighted with touches of gilt in incised, angular, neo-Grec embellishments.

In contrast to the intimate quality of the library, the parlor was designed for entertaining. It was made large so that its importance was clear and so that it could hold large numbers of guests. Like the other major rooms, it has a carved and paneled Renaissance Revival style mantelpiece.

The dining room (figures 8 and 14) is a relatively long and narrow space. Its major axis, on which the table is placed, terminates on the south in a semi-octagonal bay window with a fireplace set below its central window. A shallow recess in the west wall accommodating a sideboard defines a cross axis. Set in the deep, wood-panelled opening above the fireplace is a well done, painted and stained-glass

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window depicting water lilies, a frog, dragon flies and birds.⁸

In the main portion of the house, the second floor plan echoes that of the first floor. The second floor hall connects with the second floor back hall and gives access to six large bedrooms (one of which, that over the maids' setting room, has been converted into a bathroom). Three of the bedrooms connect with ancillary rooms which served en suite as dressing rooms or studies for the large bedrooms. In two cases, these smaller rooms could be (and now are) used as individual bedrooms.

The second-floor trim and doors are relatively plain; the mantels are simple--paneled affairs in light-colored marbles. One noteworthy detail survives on the second floor: the nineteenth-century hall wallpaper, an airy, bamboo trellis pattern with intertwined, conventionalized morning glories; the colors are buff, brown and shades of green, lavender and blue on an off-white ground. Like the second-floor hall, many rooms in the house probably once were papered. Now all save the upper hall with its wallpaper and the lower hall with its dado have plain, painted plaster walls.

The service areas of the house include the ell, attic and basement. The latter is rubblestone walled, with brick walls supporting interior partitions. During the major renovations the house underwent in 1918 the porch posts, removed from the exterior of the building, were salvaged and reused as reinforcing timbers to shore-up the sagging first-floor hall floor. Apparently never planned for active use, the basement has low head room and an unpaved floor. Originally it contained a wine cellar and apparatus for the production of illuminating gas. There is scant evidence of either now.

The basement is entered via an exterior bulkhead or by steps leading down from the first floor back hall. Off this hall, at one

⁸This painted and stained glass window was probably not installed in the house when it was built. In design the window looks to be the work of the 1870s or '80s, and the c. 1870 photograph of the house (figure 7) shows a double-hung sash window in this location.

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end, is the main hall and the maids' sitting room; at the opposite end is the former laundry room,⁹ a water closet beside the back door, and the entrance to the kitchen (see figure 8). The kitchen retains its cookstove fireplace and a large soapstone sink. Beside the kitchen are the pantries leading to the dining room.

The second floor of the ell contains three servants' bedrooms and a large linen closet. Down the second floor back hall is the original, single bathroom which served the family quarters. The attic stair is off the back hall. The attic is unfinished storage space, illuminated by skylights. Here it is possible to see that the house was built with full frame construction.

⁹In recent years much of the service ell was made into a caretaker's apartment. Few changes were required, the only substantial change being conversion of the original laundry into a kitchen.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1864-65 **Builder/Architect** Edmond Coggeshall, builder;
John H. Sturgis, architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

Greenvale Farm, as developed by John Barstow and managed by his and succeeding heirs, illuminates significant aspects of American agriculture and society. To perceive its place in our culture, one must know its history.

Portsmouth was the second colonial settlement in what later became Rhode Island. A group of Boston merchants and religious individualists, exiled from the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1638, sought broadened economic opportunity and increased freedom of conscience by creating an independent community on the north end of Aquidneck Island in Narragansett Bay, outside the jurisdiction of any British colonial government. By the mid-seventeenth century a faction of the Portsmouth group had established Newport, at the south end of the island, and the lands of Aquidneck were gradually parcelled out to individual owners for agricultural use. Greenvale, in the south end of Portsmouth, was part of a tract east of Wapping Road deeded to Thomas Burton before 1657. Some time during the eighteenth century the Burton property was divided: the northern section became Vaucluse Farm, a country estate developed by retired English merchant Samuel Elam in the late eighteenth century and renowned for its fine gardens; to the south was the Slocum Farm, then running from Wapping Road to the Sakonnet River. It was the Slocum family who erected the Federal-era farmhouse on the property, later utilized by John Barstow to house his farmer/caretaker. The Slocum Farm was owner operated -- prosperous but unremarkable.¹

In 1809 John Slocum sold the family farm to Samuel Elam of Vaucluse; Elam apparently kept it separate from Vaucluse. Elam died in the 1820s and the property was sold by his executors in 1837 to William Potter of Newport. In 1852 Potter divided the 100-acre farm into two parcels, selling the western portion to William Maxon Rogers of New York. After passing through several owners, the eastern portion of the old Slocum Farm, including the farmhouse, was purchased by John S. Barstow in August of 1864 for \$15,000.

¹A remarkably detailed French military map of Aquidneck Island, drawn up late in 1780 by L.-A. and Charles Berthier, shows the Slocum Farm laid out in open fields bounded by stone walls. A house stood on the site of the extant farmhouse at Greenvale; as today, an orchard was located behind the house. The map is reproduced in Howard C. Rice, Jr. and Anne S. K. Brown's The American Campaign's of Rochambeau's Army, Brown and Princeton Universities, 1972, volume 11, plates 7 and 9.

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By October, Barstow had engaged the young, English-trained Boston architect John Hubbard Sturgis to design his main house, stable and new barn; and had selected Edmond Coggeshall of Portsmouth as his builder. Construction took about eighteen months, yet John Barstow (together with his brother Daniel and a hired hand) was living at Greenvale, presumably in the old Slocum house, and farming the estate by July, 1865.² Coggeshall completed construction late in 1865, at a cost estimated to have been \$43,000.

John Sergeant Barstow (1824-81) ended a very successful career in Boston as a merchant engaged in the Calcutta trade when he purchased and developed Greenvale Farm. Like a good many nineteenth-century entrepreneurs, Barstow was able to give up business when he entered middle age, devoting himself to the leisurely life of a country gentleman. One of thirteen children born to Dr. and Mrs. Gideon Barstow of Mattapoisett, Massachusetts, he never married and, from the first, Greenvale Farm appears to have been planned as a place of retirement used during most of the year by John Barstow in company with two unmarried siblings, Daniel and Catherine. Several sons of Gideon Barstow and wife had careers in the military, most notably General Simon Barstow; however, like John, Daniel Barstow was a merchant in the Far-East trade. He aided his older brother managing Greenvale and together they kept a fleet of small sail boats. Their sister, Catherine A. Barstow, despite emotional disorders which led to her confinement early and late in life, ran the Greenvale Farm household during the 1860s, '70s and '80s. A photograph of about 1870 shows John, Daniel and Catherine Barstow on the south porch of Greenvale's main house (figure 7) -- a close-knit family in retirement, withdrawn from the bustle of Boston and the Newport social whirl.

The Barstows' life at Greenvale was quiet but purposeful. Kate busied herself supervising the house and staff. John and Daniel took

²Most information on the Barstows at Greenvale is derived from Rhode Island census records for 1865, 1875 and 1885; and from federal census records for 1870 and 1880. Additional biographical information is taken from newspaper articles, most especially an account of Greenvale Farm published in the Newport Journal, 13 September 1912.

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particular interest in the workings of the farm, raising a small but prize dairy herd. During the 1880s, when Daniel Barstow managed Greenvale after his brother's death, the estate was noted as a model stock farm.³ Social norms notwithstanding, John and Daniel chose to describe themselves simply as farmers.⁴ Yet self-professed yeoman status did not prevent John Barstow from cultivating an interest in literature and the arts. Greenvale's library was stocked with the works of English novelists and poets, as well as books of more practical character. And he had an extensive collection of paintings which adorned the walls of the main house -- copies from the old masters, Italian and local scenes, portraits of his cattle.⁵ In addition,

³Newport Mercury, 22 September 1888, the article, titled "Historic Newport", and describing a ramble through Newport, Middletown and Portsmouth, was originally published in the Philadelphia Ledger.

⁴John Barstow was listed as follows in the census: 1865, "Farmer"; 1870, "Farmer"; 1875, "retired merchant"; 1880, "Farmer". Daniel was listed as follows: 1865, "Farmer"; 1870, "Farmer"; 1875, no occupation or status listed; 1880, "Farmer"; 1885, "retired". Catherine Barstow's activities were listed as follows: 1870, "keeping House"; 1875, "House Keeper"; 1880, "Keeping House"; 1885, "house wife" (in 1885, having inherited Greenvale Farm from John, she was listed as the "Head of Household").

⁵No account or inventory of the contents of Greenvale's main house during the years of Barstow occupancy survives. However, John Barstow was taxed in 1870 and later for \$100,000 in personal property at Greenvale -- an enormous sum. The known value of his livestock and farm equipment indicated that most of these valuable possessions were household furnishings. John Barstow left "the furniture, pictures and plate" in the main house to Catherine. Her will lists many pictures left to specific individuals, and nine pictures which went to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. It would appear that most, if not all, of these paintings came to her from John Barstow's estate (see Portsmouth probate records, book 7, pp 64-67 & 106-107, and book 10, p. 27; Portsmouth tax books, 1870-1899). Catherine Barstow left John Barstow's books to the Redwood Library in Newport, where they are kept together as a distinct, endowed collection, added to from time to time with new selections, mostly of poetry (information on the Barstow Collection at Redwood Library was kindly supplied by Richard Champlin). Daniel, too, had an extensive library and Catherine Barstow left his books to the Newport Public Library.

(See Continuation Sheet # 9)

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Greenvale itself was a consciously aesthetic statement.

Labor at Greenvale, as in most such establishments, was divided between house and farm. A farmer/caretaker, resident year-round, labored in the fields and farmyard. He was generally assisted by a hired dairymaid and, most probably, by members of his own family. The Barstows employed a coachman and a succession of house servants, three to four at a time. All the house servants were women, most Irish-born; only two stayed with the Barstows for any considerable period of time.⁶

Despite comfortable and busy lives, the Barstows' years at Greenvale were repeatedly touched by misfortune. Their mother, who spent much time with them, died at Greenvale late in 1881, which cancelled plans to spend the winter at the farm. John, Daniel and Catherine returned to Boston where John, melancholy and despondent due to what accounts of the day describe as hereditary gout and acute gastritis, and fearful he was losing his reason, committed suicide on Christmas Day while Catherine and Daniel were at church. John Barstow's fortune was divided between his many brothers and sisters. In addition to cash settlements, Catherine was given Greenvale Farm, together with the contents of the main house -- furniture, paintings, books and plate. Daniel, who served as an executor of his brother's estate, received the Greenvale livestock, farm equipment and boats. Despite the loss of their mother and brother, Catherine and Daniel returned to Greenvale, continuing to stay there seasonally through the 1880s. In 1889, however, Daniel died, leaving the bulk of his fortune to Kate.

⁶Catherine Barstow's 1910 will left cash bequests to two employees: Margaret Leary, who is listed in the 1880 census as a servant in the Greenvale household; and Annie McGowan, who is first listed in the 1885 census as a servant working at Greenvale. Census records indicate that all other servants employed at Greenvale between 1870 and 1885 stayed less than 5 years. To date, census information on the Greenvale farmer/caretakers, who were listed separately from the household, has not come to light. The records do reveal that John Barstow paid \$800 in 1870 for farm labor, and the Newport Journal article of 1912, cited earlier, makes reference to Truman Main who worked as the Barstow farmer for 17 years.

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After Daniel Barstow's death, the history of Greenvale Farm as a Victorian country estate came to an end, for during the 1890s Catherine Barstow became severely distressed by mental illness and was confined for the rest of her life to the Boston house Daniel left her. At her death in 1910 Greenvale had been closed for some years -- the house empty, the farm untenanted. The place gained a reputation as a "resort for tramps... and idlers."⁷ For decades the buildings stood open, abandoned and vandalized.

As the last of thirteen children, Catherine Barstow had inherited a sizeable fortune which she, in turn, left to a host of nieces and nephews. Three of these, as residuary legatees, inherited Greenvale Farm, then derelict, which had been left to no individual. One of the three, Charlotte Condit Parker, took an interest in Greenvale and, with her husband, Major General James Parker, brought it back to life.

General and Mrs. Parker were both raised in Newark, New Jersey.⁸ Mrs. Parker's mother was Ellen Condit, Catherine, Daniel and John Barstow's sister. General Parker, an 1876 West Point graduate, had a long and distinguished army career as a cavalry officer, serving on the western frontier, in the Spanish American War, the Philippine Insurrection and World War I. He was awarded three Silver Stars for gallantry, the Distinguished Service Medal and the Congressional Medal of Honor. Upon retiring in 1918, General and Mrs. Parker resolved to restore Greenvale as their home and make it a working farm once again. The Parkers brought the house back from its state of ruin. The only major change they made was removal of the encircling porch, then in very poor condition; they chose to remove it, in part, to make the interior of the house brighter. General Parker hired a farmer to work the fields; raise pigs, chickens, geese, and turkeys; and keep a dairy herd. In 1918, a young farmer's assistant was also engaged, Frank Silvia, a native of the Azores, who emigrated to this country in 1912 and eventually became Greenvale's farmer/caretaker, continuing in this capacity until his death in 1979.

⁷Providence Journal, 14 June 1910.

⁸Information on the Parker family has been supplied by Mr. Cortlandt Parker.

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In 1934 Greenvale Farm was inherited by Major General Cortlandt Parker, son of General and Mrs. James Parker. Cortlandt Parker graduated from West Point in 1906. An artillery officer, he served in the First and Second World Wars, winning the Distinguished Service Medal, the Silver Star, the Legion of Merit and becoming a member of the French Legion of Honor. General Cortlandt Parker sustained the tradition his parents had re-established at Greenvale Farm. At his death in 1960 the estate passed to his wife, Elizabeth Gray Parker, who left it to their sons, James and Cortlandt, in 1969. The Parker brothers are Greenvale's present owners. Although in recent years it has become impractical to keep livestock on the farm, and the farm barn is now gone, in all other respects the Parker family maintains this Victorian country seat, in a spirit of stewardship, as it was originally planned and used.

As laid out and maintained, John Barstow's 1864 Greenvale Farm embodies the ferme orné -- the embellished, rural-agricultural retreat idealized in the mid-Victorian era. In 1863 John Barstow acquired a copy of landscape-theorist Robert Morris Copeland's book, Country Life.⁹ It focuses on the management of a single, 60-acre "ornamented farm" in general character very like Greenvale. Copeland described it as a ferme orné, stating that, though perhaps too quaint, "no other term sufficiently describes a country place that may gratify all tastes of a lover of country life."¹⁰ In introducing his subject, Copeland characterized the sort of person he thought would care to establish such a place and in doing so he sketched a portrait of John Barstow:

"The man of earnest mind, who gladly unbends from serious work and wanders with the greatest satisfaction through lawns and flower gardens, ultimately craves something more solid; a view of the practical life.... Besides the mental gratification desired from a combination of pursuits, there is almost laid upon every one who makes a country home (a responsibility) to provide occupation as well as recreation.

⁹With John Barstow's books at the Redwood Library is his signed copy of the 1863 edition of Country Life, first published in 1859.

¹⁰Country Life, p. 3.

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Owners of country seats in America, are generally men who have retired from active business, and by having a farm connected with their homesteads, they secure something to do and to think about, and thus avoid the evil of mental inactivity."¹¹

The ferme ornée, what we would now call a gentleman's farm, could be found throughout nineteenth-century America. Aquidneck Island, because of the presence of Newport -- the nation's most fashionable summer colony -- became a center for the type. A number of such farms survive, in whole or in part,¹² but none is more representative than Greenvale -- none better defines that especially mid-nineteenth-century type of elaborated farm occupied and managed by its genteel owner which Copeland presented as a paradigm.

In general character, then, Greenvale follows the Copeland model; as a stock farm it exemplifies the area of agriculture Copeland thought best suited to the gentleman-farmer; architecturally, however, it does not reflect Copeland's precepts.

Copeland considered the Gothic style inappropriate to the ferme ornée.¹³ In this he was out of tune with several better-known theorists of the day, most notably Andrew Jackson Downing, whose widely influential books on landscape and rural architecture were published between 1841 and 1850 and continued to have a wide readership through the 1860s and '70s. Downing was a proponent of the Gothic style. The main house at Greenvale embodies a form of Gothicism emergent in the 1860s which owes more to gothicizing English and French upper-middle-class country houses of the day than to Downing and American work of the '40s and '50s. The European sources of this new mode are key, for the architect of Greenvale Farm, John Sturgis, was English-trained and familiar with work on the continent. His friend Richard Morris Hunt, trained in France, designed the J.N.A. Griswold house built in Newport between 1862 and 1864, the first American example of the style.

¹¹Country Life, p. 4.

¹²Examples include Glen Farm, Vaucluse Farm and Green Animals in Portsmouth; Hammersmith Farm and the Swiss Village in Newport.

¹³Country Life, p. 386.

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It was completed as Greenvale was begun.¹⁴

In the mid-nineteenth century the Griswold and Barstow houses were considered Gothic. Though very up-to-date, even avant-garde, they nevertheless fit Downing's 1850 definition of the "Rural Gothic, common in England and Germany, with high gables wrought with tracery, bay-windows, and other features of domestic expression...",¹⁵ as well as the terms "modern gothic," "Tudor" and "English Gothic" used in describing related buildings erected in the '60s and '70s. Today this mode is familiar as the "stick style" through the writings of Vincent Scully and all those who have taken his term up and made it common usage. By whatever name, Greenvale Farm, like the Griswold house which Scully made famous, is a major monument in American mid-nineteenth-century-architecture.

John Hubbard Sturgis (1834-88)¹⁶ was America's most cosmopolitan Victorian architect. His work at Greenvale has a special place in his career, for it is the finest of the remaining houses he did on his own in the mid-1860s, while nominally in the office of Gridley J. F. Bryant, and before he set up a partnership with Charles Brigham in 1866. John Sturgis was born into a wealthy and socially well connected Boston family. His father, Russell Sturgis, a China-trade merchant, took his family to the Far East and it was there that John was born. Later, Russell Sturgis became a partner in the English banking house, Baring Brothers, and settled in London. John Sturgis grew up in London and after a flirtation with a career as a painter turned to architecture,

¹⁴A Newport Mercury article of 15 October 1864 announces the Barstow project's inception; a Providence Journal article of 3 December 1864 noted completion of the Griswold house.

¹⁵Andrew Jackson Downing, The Architecture of Country Houses, 1850; Dover reprint, 1969, p. 274.

¹⁶Margaret Henderson Floyd, the leading authority on Sturgis, has graciously assisted in preparation of this nomination. Commentary on Sturgis, his career and work, is based on material supplied by Ms. Floyd. The most valuable recently published source on John Sturgis is Margaret Floyd's article, "A Terra-cotta cornerstone for Copley Square Museum of Fine Arts...by Sturgis & Brigham" published in the Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, volume XXXII, #2, May 1973, pp. 83-103.

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training with James Colling and practicing briefly with Colling in England. After marrying Bostonian Frances Codman in 1858, Sturgis moved to Boston and entered the office of Gridley Bryant, who had one of the largest American architectural firms of the day. It was during Sturgis' years of association with Bryant that the firm executed its most famous commission, the old Boston City Hall (1861-65). It was also in these years that Sturgis, working on his own, did houses for several relatives and in-laws and men acquainted with his father. John Barstow may well have fallen into this latter category. In 1866, John Sturgis ended his connection with Bryant and became senior partner in the firm of Sturgis & Brigham. He quickly returned to London, establishing a unique transatlantic practice. In 1870, Sturgis & Brigham won the Boston Museum of Fine Arts competition. Their design, developed by Sturgis, was based on the recently completed South Kensington (Now Victoria & Albert) Museum in London, like it incorporating a lavish program of exterior terra-cotta ornament and figurative panels. Through 1886, Sturgis worked with Brigham, despite the fact that Sturgis spent much of his time in England and Brigham remained in Boston. The firm had a substantial practice, mostly designing houses. The most famous of these was and remains the addition designed by Sturgis & Brigham in 1882 for 306 Dartmouth Street in Boston's Back Bay for Frederick L. Ames. The monumental "Jacobeathan" Ames stairhall, on a much grander scale, recalls Sturgis' work at Greenvale eighteen years earlier.

In addition to its rightful place in the annals of American architectural history as an important example of mid-nineteenth century Gothicism, and its value as an important work by an important architect, the main house at Greenvale Farm deserves commendation as a fine design. Despite changes, the exterior remains a winsome, picturesque ensemble; a highly rational yet aesthetically engaging plan, well proportioned spaces and handsome detail mark the interior.

The layout of the house bespeaks in the arrangement, size and finish of each room, corridor and staircase, the social history of affluent nineteenth-century Americans and the servant class which ministered to them. Even in deep seclusion, it illustrates the discretely grand yet purposeful ornamental farm -- a place for recreation and amusement, for thought and work, for pride and a sense of fulfillment. It may legitimately be interpreted as an American example of the landed estate, complete with house of manorial scale and demeanor, and with a history of hereditary ownership -- for centuries a potent, perhaps the most potent, symbol of social standing achieved and retained.

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Hall, Heather, Boston Museum of Fine Arts Paintings Department:
Conversations, July, 1979 concerning the Catherine Barstow bequest..

Newport Journal: 11 November 1875, 13 September 1912.

Newport Mercury: 15 October 1864, 10 December 1864, 6 January 1866,
31 December 1881, 14 January 1882, 13 March 1886, 22 September 1888.

Parker, Cortlandt: correspondence, May, 1979.

Portsmouth Land Evidences: Book 9, p. 333; Book 10, pp. 253-254;
Book 12, p. 34; Book 14, pp. 43, 494.

Portsmouth Probate Records: Book 7, pp. 64-67, 106-107; Book 8,
p. 116; Book 10, p. 278.

Portsmouth Tax Books: 1870-1879.

Providence Journal: 14 June 1910.

Rhode Island Census Records: 1865, 1875, 1885; ms., Rhode Island
State Archives.

U. S. Census Records: 1870, 1880; microfilm, Rhode Island Historical
Society Library.

West, Edward, Original Land Grants of Portsmouth...; ms., Rhode Island
Historical Society Library.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Copeland, Robert Morris, Country Life..., Boston, 1863.

Floyd, Margaret Henderson, "A Terra-Cotta Cornerstone for Copley Square...",
Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, volume XXXII, #2,
May, 1973: pp. 83-103. (See Continuation sheet #15)

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property approx. 53 acres

Quadrangle name Tiverton

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UMT References

A

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4	6	0	0	5	3	0
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4	6	0	0	1	5	0
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Verbal boundary description and justification

The area nominated comprises all of lot 4, Portsmouth Assessor's Plat 65 (a portion is also on map 67). The farm's fields are an integral part of its character and history. Therefore, the entire farm, land and buildings

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries is nominated.

state code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title David Chase, Deputy Director

organization Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission date August 1979

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

city or town Providence state Rhode Island

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 Theresa Williams

title State Historic Preservation Officer

date October 3, 1979

For HCRS use only

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

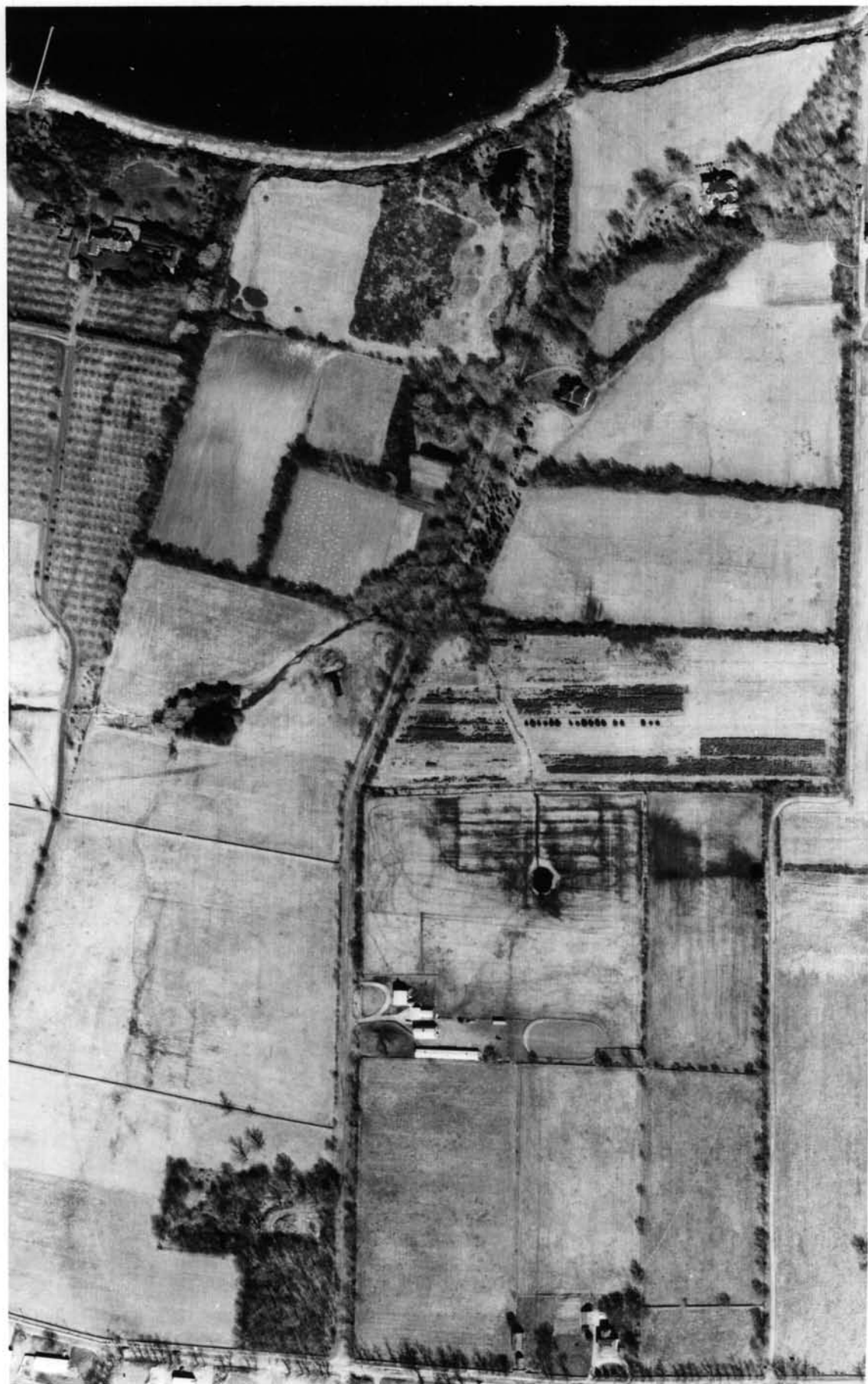
date

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration



Greenvale Farm
582 Wapping Road
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Photograph courtesy of the Rhode Island
Statewide Planning Program; taken
April 1970.

Negative filed at the
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street, Providence, R.I.

Vertical aerial view; at the top (west)
is Wapping Road; at the bottom (east)
is the Sakonnet River.

Figure 1.



Greenvale Farm
582 Wapping Road
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Photograph courtesy of Cortlandt
& James Parker; taken c. 1925.

Negative filed at the
R. I. Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit St., Providence, R. I.

Oblique aerial view, from east to west,
with the Sakonnet River in the foreground.
In the right background is the Greenvale
farm complex of which only the carriage
house (obscured in this view) survives.

Figure 2.



Greenvale Farm
582 Wapping Road
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

David Chase, photographer;
view taken June, 1979.

Negative filed at the
R. I. Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit St., Providence, R. I.

View of the old farmhouse at Greenvale
from the southwest; dwelling said to
have been built by the Slocum family
and dated in the Federal period.

Figure 3.



Greenvale Farm
582 Wapping Road
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Warren Jagger, photographer;
view taken June, 1979.

Negative filed at the
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit St., Providence, R. I.

View of the main house from the east.

Figure 4.



Greenvale Farm
582 Wapping Road
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Warren Jagger, photographer;
view taken June, 1979.

Negative filed at the
R. I. Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit St., Providence, R. I.

View of the main house from the north-
east showing the entrance elevation.

Figure 5.



Greenvale Farm
582 Wapping Road
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Warren Jagger, photographer;
view taken June, 1979.

Negative filed at the
R. I. Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit St., Providence, R. I.

View of the main house from the southeast
(compare with figure 7, taken before
the porch was removed).

Figure 6.



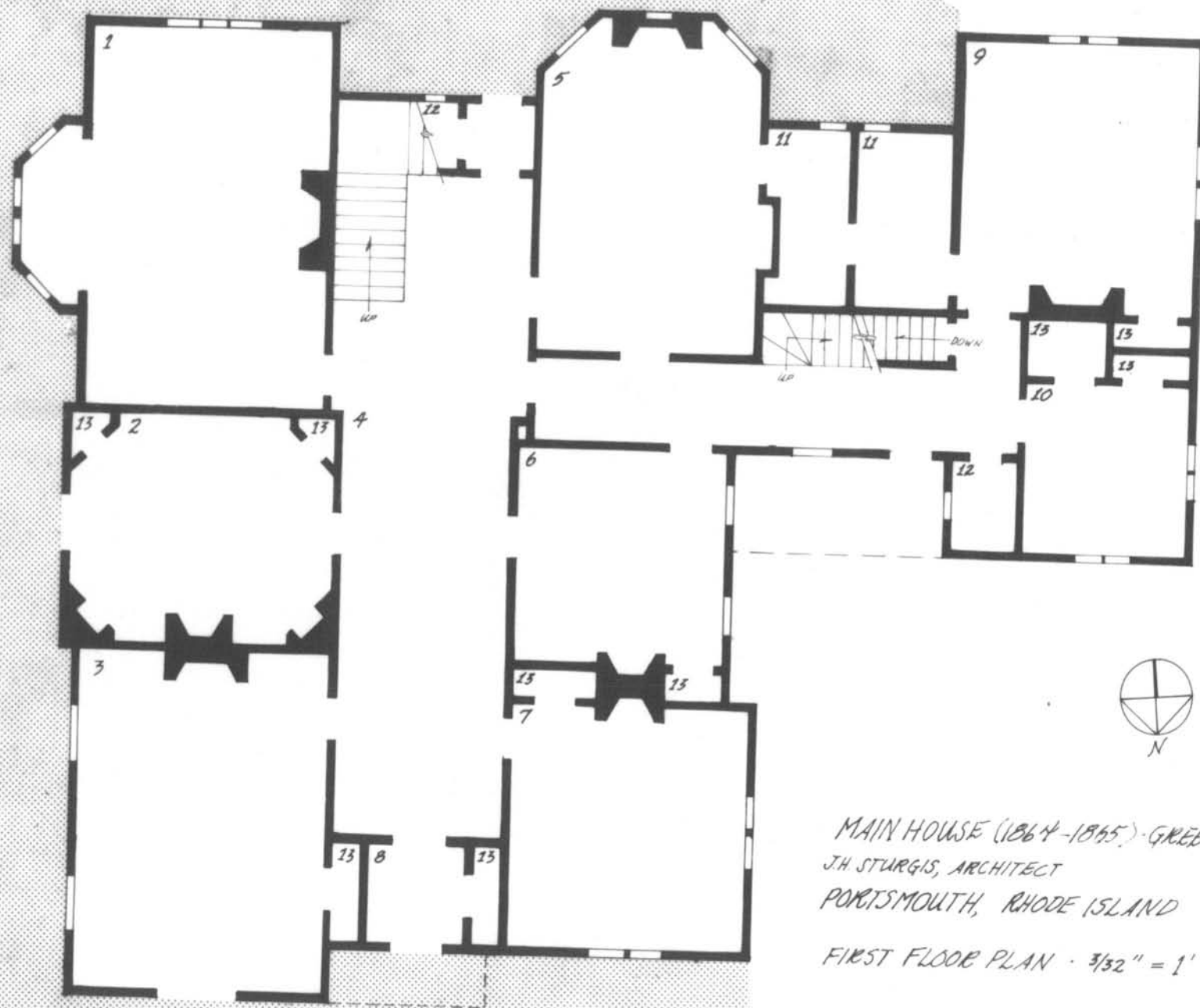
Greenvale Farm
582 Wapping Road
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Photograph courtesy of Cortlandt &
James Parker; view taken c. 1870.

Negative filed at the
R. I. Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit St., Providence, R. I.

View of the main house from the southeast
(taken before the porch was removed--
compare with figure 6); the three persons
on the porch are believed to be John,
Daniel and Catherine Barstow. The carriage
house is visible in the left background.

Figure 7.



KEY

1. PARLOR
2. LIBRARY
3. BILLIARD ROOM
(TROPHY ROOM)
4. HALL
5. DINING ROOM
6. MAIDS' SITTING ROOM
7. SITTING ROOM
(MUSIC ROOM)
8. VESTIBULE
9. KITCHEN
10. FORMER LAUNDRY
11. PANTRY
12. WATER CLOSET
13. CLOSET



MAIN HOUSE (1864-1865) - GREENVALE FARM
J.H. STURGIS, ARCHITECT
PORTSMOUTH, RHODE ISLAND

FIRST FLOOR PLAN · $\frac{3}{32}'' = 1'$

CONJECTURAL PORCH PLAN

Greenvale Farm
582 Wapping Road
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Drawing by D. Chase & S. Dynes,
September, 1979.

Original filed at the
R. I. Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit St., Providence, R. I.

Main house first floor plan.

Figure 8.



Greenvale Farm
582 Wapping Road
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Warren Jagger, photographer;
view taken June 1979.

Negative filed at the
R. I. Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street, Providence, R. I.

View of the main house hall, looking south
from the entrance vestibule toward the
staircase.

Figure 9.



Greenvale Farm
582 Wapping Road
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Warren Jagger, photographer;
view taken June 1979.

Negative filed at the
R. I. Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit St., Providence, R.I.

View in the main house hall: detail of the
staircase from the northwest (newel post finial
not original).

Figure 10.



Greenvale Farm

582 Wapping Road

Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Warren Jagger, photographer;
view taken June 1979.

Negative filed at the
R. I. Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street, Providence, R.I.

Main house: view of the southeast corner of the
billiard room, now known as the trophy room;
hall visible on right.

Figure 11.



Greenvale Farm
582 Wapping Road
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Warren Jagger, photographer;
view taken June 1979.

Negative filed at the
R. I. Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street, Providence, R. I.

Main house: south view into the library; the lawn,
Sakonnet River, and Little Compton shore are
visible out the French doors.

Figure 12.



Greenvale Farm
582 Wapping Road
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Warren Jagger, photographer;
view taken June 1979.

Negative filed at the
R. I. Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street, Providence, R. I.

Main house: view toward the southwest
corner of the parlor.

Figure 13.



Greenvale Farm
582 Wapping Road
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Warren Jagger, photographer;
view taken June 1979.

Negative filed at the
R. I. Historical Preservation Commission
150 Benefit Street, Providence, R. I.

Main house: view of the south end of
the dining room (pantry door on right);
stained and painted glass window not
original.

Figure 14

