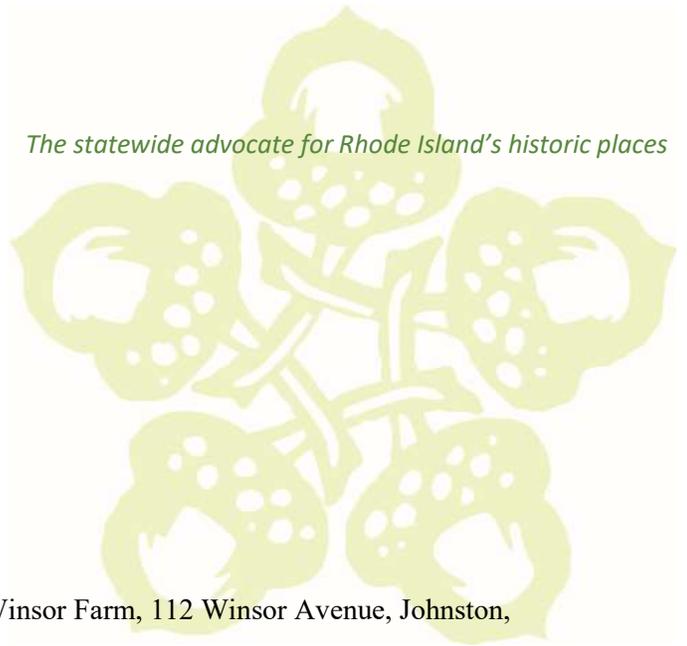


The statewide advocate for Rhode Island's historic places



Ken Ayars
Chief, Division of Agriculture
Agricultural Lands Preservation Commission
c/o Department of Environmental Management
235 Promenade Street
Providence RI 02908

Dear Mr. Ayars:

Preserve Rhode Island is writing in support of preserving Winsor Farm, 112 Winsor Avenue, Johnston, Rhode Island through purchase of development rights.

We note that the Agricultural Land Preservation Commission's application for sale of development rights asks for information about notable historic features. As Rhode Island's only statewide non-profit advocate for historic preservation, we want to speak particularly to that point. The two residential structures on the property date to the late 17th and early 18th centuries, and they are located on a well-preserved rural landscape which has remained in the same family's ownership since the mid-17th century. The historic landscape setting of the farm is unusually intact, with the farmland and woods surrounding the historic houses, providing expansive views uninterrupted by modern intrusions. The preservation of historic buildings in this intact context is increasingly rare in Rhode Island. In addition, an historic cemetery exists on the property, in use from the 18th century to the present day.

The approximately 160 acres of land represent Johnston's past character and existing rural quality that the town has made a goal to actively protect for its future residents. The property is being evaluated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

Upon visiting the site, it is undoubtedly a major resource and valuable piece of open land that surrounds two important historic buildings and includes an historic family cemetery. Understanding the family's need to sell, we hope that the property can be preserved. The proposal for a solar array, as proposed, would demolish the buildings, remove all the woodland and cover the agricultural fields: the prospect of this configuration is, frankly, horrifying. Keeping the property permanently available for farming use would serve not only that important public purpose, but also protect a rare survivor of the rural cultural landscape.

We encourage the Division of Agriculture and the Agricultural Lands Preservation Commission to act favorably on the application to save the Winsor Farm.

Sincerely,

Valerie Talmage
Executive Director