District #1 - Congressman Mendel Davis

3. Development of the English Colonies

7. America at Work

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

1. **NAME**

   **COMMON:**
   Willtown Bluff

   **AND/OR HISTORIC:**
   Wilton, New London

2. **LOCATION**

   **STREET AND NUMBER:**
   Five miles west of Adams Run Community, just beyond the
   end of County Highway 55 on banks of S. Edisto River

   **CITY OR TOWN:**
   Adams Run

   **STATE:**
   South Carolina

   **CODE:**
   045

   **COUNTY:**
   Charleston

   **CODE:**
   019

3. **CLASSIFICATION**

   **CATEGORY (Check One):**
   District
   Site
   Structure
   Object

   **OWNERSHIP:**
   Public
   Private
   Both

   **PUBLIC ACQUISITION:**
   In Process
   Being Considered

   **STATUS:**
   Occupied
   Unoccupied
   Preservation work in progress

   **ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC:**
   Yes:
   Restricted
   Unrestricted
   No

   **PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate):**
   Agricultural
   Government
   Park
   Commercial
   Industrial
   Private Residence
   Educational
   Military
   Religious
   Entertainment
   Museum
   Scientific
   Transportation
   Other (Specify)
   Comments

4. **OWNER OF PROPERTY**

   **OWNER'S NAME:**
   Various

   **STREET AND NUMBER:**

   **CITY OR TOWN:**

5. **LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

   **COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:**
   Register of Mesne Conveyance

   **STREET AND NUMBER:**
   2 Court House Square

   **CITY OR TOWN:**
   Charleston

   **STATE:**
   South Carolina

   **CODE:**
   045

6. **REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

   **TITLE OF SURVEY:**
   Preliminary Historical Survey of Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Counties

   **DATE OF SURVEY:**
   1972

   **DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:**
   Office of Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Regional Planning Council and Governments

   **STREET AND NUMBER:**
   2 Court House Square

   **CITY OR TOWN:**
   Charleston

   **STATE:**
   South Carolina

   **CODE:**
   045
Willtown was located on a 25 foot high bluff overlooking the South Edisto River, called the Pon Pon River in the 18th Century. The town site is almost all level, its lawn interspersed with large oak trees. Only the northern section is wooded and three buildings are located on the cleared portion.

The Parsonage was built without a cellar in 1836 by the Episcopalians. Its portico was altered and wings added to the house some ten years ago. This building occupies the upper parts of lots #10 and #11 and a garage is on lot #24.

Willtown Plantation House (at one time called New Hope) was built in 1820 for Lewis Morris, IV, son of the only New Jersey signer of the Declaration of Independence. The original high brick foundations have since been removed and additions have been made on the river or western side. The front porch is also changed. The building is said to have been used as a hospital by Confederate troops in 1863.

There is a two-room summer house on the waterfront in front of lot #18. It was probably built during the last thirty years and is not shown on the map.

Between the summer house and the Willtown Plantation House is a ten foot high, semi-circular earthen fortification, which is thought to date from the War Between the States. It has been cut through to allow access to the summer house.

In 1820 the Presbyterians rebuilt their church, but it had burned by 1834. The Episcopalians purchased the location and erected a church in 1836. This structure was moved to Adams Run in 1879 and only a single column remains at the original site.

Unexposed remains are of a colonial village thought to have had 80 houses. Title search has uncovered 11 houses, 2 churches, and a large store. A village existed here in the late 19th Century.
**SIGNIFICANCE**

**PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)**
- [ ] Pre-Columbian
- [ ] 16th Century
- [X] 18th Century
- [X] 19th Century
- [ ] 20th Century

**SPECIFIC DATES (If Applicable and Known)** 1697, 1704, 1714

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)**
- [X] Aboriginal
- [ ] Prehistoric
- [ ] Historic
- [X] Agriculture
- [X] Architecture
- [ ] Art
- [X] Commerce
- [ ] Communications
- [ ] Conservation
- [X] Education
- [ ] Engineering
- [ ] Industry
- [ ] Invention
- [ ] Landscape
- [ ] Architecture
- [ ] Literature
- [X] Military
- [ ] Music
- [X] Political
- [X] Religion/Philosophy
- [ ] Science
- [ ] Sculpture
- [X] Social/Humanitarian
- [ ] Theater
- [X] Transportation
- [X] Urban Planning
- [X] Other (Specify)
- [X] Black History

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

Willtown was the second planned town to be established after the relocation of Charleston in 1682. It was one of two South Carolina precincts prior to the 1706 Church Act, and after that date served as a local governmental center. It was militarily important in the protection of the frontier and served as a regional commercial center.

**Architecture:** This site is of archeological significance in the exploration of the methods and types of construction in a colonial frontier town through a late 19th Century village.

**Commerce:** Records document the importance of the area as a regional source town with merchants, carpenters, a banker, and a guide/Indian trader.

**Education:** A free school was founded about 1722.

**Military:** A fort to guard the frontier was established during the early part of the Yamasee War with a garrison of some 50 men. 60 scouts and their boats were also based here. An unsuccessful Indian attack resulted in the burning of one residence.

In 1739 men from the Willtown Presbyterian Church suppressed the Stono Slave Rebellion which led to the enactment of a more complex slave code.

**Political:** Prior to the passage of the Church Act of 1706, Willtown was one of two precincts in Colonial South Carolina. After 1706, it served as a polling place, had a court of pleas, and had magistrates courts. Some residents of note were Governor Joseph Morton and Joseph Blake; Lt. Governor William Bull; Commons House of Assembly member James Cochran; and South Carolina Chief Justice Thomas Hepworth.

A mail route seems to have connected Charleston and Willtown.

**Religion:** The Anglican Dissenter religious controversy was felt in Willtown, with John Ash of the Commons House of Assembly going to England to present the Dissenter grievances before the Lords Proprietors. The Church Act of 1706 followed.

**Transportation:** A private ferry was located at the end of Chelsey Road.

**Urban Planning:** Willtown was the second planned town to be formally laid out after Charleston was relocated. The town was divided into 62 blocks with most having four one acre lots. There were 17 streets with blocks set aside for an Episcopal Church and a school. A market and a town garden were also provided locations.

**Black History:** See Military History.

**Social/Humanitarianism:** Willtown Plantation House seems to have been used as a Confederate hospital during the War Between the States.
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CORNER</th>
<th>LATITUDE</th>
<th>LONGITUDE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>32°41'10&quot;</td>
<td>80°25'05&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE</td>
<td>32°41'10&quot;</td>
<td>80°24'32&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SE</td>
<td>32°40'31&quot;</td>
<td>80°24'32&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>32°40'31&quot;</td>
<td>80°25'05&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 127.32 acres

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

STATE: CODE COUNTY: CODE

STATE: CODE COUNTY: CODE

STATE: CODE COUNTY: CODE

STATE: CODE COUNTY: CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: William H. Brabham


ORGANIZATION: Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Regional Planning Council of Governments

DATE: July 24, 1973

STREET AND NUMBER:

2 Court House Square

CITY OR TOWN: Charleston 29401

STATE: South Carolina 045

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 [X] Local [ ]

Name: Charles E. Lee

Title: Director, S.C. Department of Archives and History

Date: Sept 4, 1973

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: 1/9/74

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date: JAN 7 74