



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
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MINUTES

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION November 8, 2006

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. John Grosvenor, AIA
Ms. Patrice O'Malley Hagan
Mr. Michael Hebert, NR Review Board
Mr. Karst Hoozeboom
Dr. Patrick Malone
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon
Dr. Patricia Rubertone
Mr. Frederick C. Williamson, Chairman & SHPO

STAFF PRESENT

Mr. Jeffrey Emidy, National Register Assistant
Ms. Pamela Kennedy, Deputy Director
Mr. Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director
Ms. Sarah Zurier, Special Projects Coordinator

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Robert E. Cusack
Mr. Joseph Dias, representing Dr. Michael Sullivan, Director DEM
Dr. James Garman, NR Review Board
Mr. Robert Goff
Mr. Saul Kaplan, Executive Director, EDC
Mr. George Johnson, Statewide Planning
John P. Leyden, State Building Commissioner
Dr. Ronald Onorato
Mr. Jean Rondeau

GUESTS

Michael Cassidy, Pawtucket Planning Director
Katherine Cavanaugh, National Register consultant
Edward Connors, National Register consultant

II. AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 A.M., Mr. Williamson, presiding.

2. Minutes of October 11, 2006, meeting

On a motion by Dr. Morenon, seconded by Mr. Grosvenor, the Commission

VOTED unanimously to approve the Minutes of October 11, 2006.

3. Executive Director's Report

a) Mr. Sanderson reported that in 2005 the RI Historic Preservation Investment Tax Credit program approved \$60 million in credits, and in 2006 an estimated \$66 million in credits will be approved.

b) Mr. Hoogeboom moved, seconded unanimously and VOTED to send a letter of condolence to the family of Ann Utter, former Commissioner.

c) Mr. Sanderson reported on the City of Woonsocket proposed demolition of the Lafayette Worsted Company mills on Hamlet Avenue and the Loridan Worsted Mill on Villa Nova Street to provide a site for the construction of two new middle schools. (See the letter from Mr. Sanderson to Joel Matthews, Woonsocket Director of Planning & Development, dated October 27, 2006.)

4. National Register Review Board

Final National Register Approvals

Providence Jewelry Manufacturing Historic District

Ms. Kennedy presented information about the property, which already is listed on the National Register. As originally nominated, buildings constructed after 1950 were considered "not contributing" because they were less than fifty years old at the time of nomination. However, with the passage of time, two buildings that were built for the manufacture of jewelry and that clearly relate to the significance of the historic district have passed the fifty-year mark. Ms. Kennedy explained that the inventory of a historic district should not automatically be revised every time a building in the district becomes fifty years old, but that in this particular case the two buildings clearly relate to the significance of the historic district as a whole. The concrete joist-slab construction exhibited in Brian Supply (111 Chestnut Street) represents a step in the evolution of concrete construction technology in the second quarter of the twentieth century. Beginning with mushroom columns supporting concrete slabs, progressing to concrete

column and spandrel construction, and then evolving to joist-slab construction where the joists and slab are part of a continuous pour, each technology represented an improvement in efficiency and cost. Following discussion, on a motion by Mr. Grosvenor, seconded by Dr. Malone, the Commission unanimously

VOTED final approval of the inventory amendment.

Downtown Pawtucket Historic District

Ms. Kennedy presented information about the property, the civic center of the City of Pawtucket. During the 1880s and 1890s, the area emerged as a modern urban center, culminating in construction of the library and Post Office. Downtown development continued during the early twentieth century into the 1930s. However further development lagged during the Depression years as manufacturing employment declined throughout the city. During the 1950s and 1960s, Pawtucket city government was an active participant in federal Urban Renewal programs that altered the Downtown area at the same time that construction of Interstate Highway 95 cleared a broad swath along the eastern edge of Downtown. By the last two decades of the twentieth century, Pawtucket had adopted an urban revitalization strategy that included historic preservation, and a number of important historic structures remain in the Downtown area. The proposed Downtown Pawtucket Historic District is smaller than the historical downtown, but includes the most intact concentration of remaining historic structures. Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Malone, seconded by Dr. Rubertone, the Commission unanimously

VOTED final approval of the nomination.

Bridgeton School, 16 Laurel Hill Avenue, Burrillville

Ms. Kennedy presented information about the property, an 1897 two-room school that serves today as the headquarters, library and museum of the Burrillville Historical Society. Following discussion, on a motion by Mr. Grosvenor, seconded by Dr. Rubertone, the Commission unanimously

VOTED final approval of the nomination.

Preliminary Nominations

The scheduled preliminary nominations were deferred to the December meeting.

5. Report of the Loan Committee

Ms. Zurier presented the report of the State Preservation Grants Review Panel.

The State Preservation Grants (SPG) program is now in its fourth year. The program was created by the RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) as a result of a successful bond issue in 2002 and was extended with a second bond issue in 2004. The bond issues provided \$6 million for the RIHPHC to distribute through a competitive grant program. Regulations for the program were adopted in June 2003 and revised in May 2005.

In 2003, 46 grant applications were received from museums and cultural arts centers, and 26 of them received a combined total of \$1.5 million. In 2004, 50 grant applications were received from museums and cultural arts centers, and 24 of them received a combined total of \$1.5 million. Changes made to the program in 2005 invited applications from public historic sites, like town halls and public libraries; also the amount of available funds was reduced to \$1 million per year for three years. The 2005 grant round yielded 36 applications, and 21 of them received a combined total of \$1 million.

The 56 grant awards to date have ranged from \$5000 to \$200,000, have reached every region of the state, and include projects in 21 cities and towns. To date, thirty-one projects are complete, and the remainder are more or less underway.

In 2006, RIHPHC received 40 applications from 23 cities and towns. Requests for assistance with capital preservation projects totaled \$2,468,997. Of these requests, 13 were for small projects that cost \$45,000 or less, and 27 were for large projects that cost up to \$7.9 million.

Once the applications were checked for completeness, RIHPHC staff members and SPG Review Panel members received at least 20 applications each to review and score. Everyone was asked to identify potential conflicts-of-interest, and not to read or comment on those applications. Staff members discussed their individual scores, and consolidated their scores to reflect staff consensus (to be included as Ted's scores in Review Panel deliberations).

The SPG Review Panel met for the first time on September 27, and Ron Onorato was elected Chairman. Within the pool of Small Project applications, the panel arrived on a consensus score and asked staff to collect additional information about specific applications. They repeated the process for Large Project applications. The panel's assignment for the next meeting was to rank applications within the Small and Large Project pools and within separate geographical regions.

In the weeks following the meeting, staff collected additional information that was distributed to staff and review panel members in mid-October. Staff members met to discuss and consolidate their ranks to reflect staff consensus (to be included as Ted's ranks in Review Panel deliberations).

The SPG Review Panel met for the second time on November 6. The Review Panel recommended two projects for full funding in the Blackstone Valley (\$200,000) and four for full funding in the North/West (\$107,247). In the other four regions, the Reviewers recommended

full or partial funding for individual projects. The panel recommended one project in the East Bay (\$50,000), three projects in the West Bay (\$124,000), three in Providence (\$168,250), and six in South County (\$286,924). Partial funding reflected an intent to make substantial commitments to large projects while not overlooking the many other excellent projects.

The SPG Panel recommended that three grantees whose property was not already listed or in the process of listing on the National Register should receive an additional \$5000 for the preparation of a National Register nomination by an approved professional: Woody Hill School (Exeter), Belknap School (Johnston), and Borders Farm (Foster). The recommended grant amounts reflect this adjustment.

The recommendations include seven Small Project Grants (\$177,056) and fourteen Large Project Grants (\$882,944); \$5400 reserved for purchasing construction signs; and \$4000 reserved for bond fees) for a total of \$1,064,678. Of the 21 State Preservation Grant projects in 2006, twelve applied for the first time in 2006, three had applied for funds before but had been denied, and six had received a grant before. Sixteen cities and towns are represented, including five new communities and eleven returning communities.

The SPG Review Panel made several closing suggestions: investigate opportunities for small arts/culture/historic organizations to improve their organizational capacity; steer small organizations that are first-time applicants towards Small Project Grants; and confirm if SPG Procedures require grantees to seek bids from qualified preservation contractors. Some of the funding agreements will be contingent on the grantee meeting particular conditions. Pawtucket Armory will be directed to apply SPG funds to the roof work as phase 1 of their larger project for the drill shed. Warwick City Hall may be directed to hire an architect as a condition of the State Preservation Grant.

Three of the panelists have completed their three-year appointments: Sheila Brush (Grow Smart Rhode Island: East Greenwich/Statewide), Richard Youngken (Dunn Foundation: South Kingstown /Newport), and Mary Kate Harrington (Rhode Island Housing: Warwick/Statewide). The Commission will be asked to appoint their replacements in 2007.

The recommendations of the State Preservation Grants Review Panel are presented here for consideration by the RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission.

**REVIEW PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR 2006 STATE PRESERVATION GRANTS**

SName	Region	Town	Request\$	Grant\$	Total proj.\$
Pawtucket Public Library	Blackstone Valley	Pawtucket	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$663,650
Pawtucket Armory	Blackstone Valley	Pawtucket	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$5,289,263
Bristol Statehouse	East Bay/Islands	Bristol	\$95,000	\$50,000	\$198,941
Ft Hamilton Barracks	Newport	Newport	\$100,000	\$68,857	\$816,268
Chateau-sur-Mer	Newport	Newport	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$2,000,000
Borders Farm	North/West	Foster	\$33,600	\$33,600	\$45,000
Smithfield Exchange Bank	North/West	Smithfield	\$29,407	\$29,407	\$44,110
Belknap School	North/West	Johnston	\$35,000	\$35,000	\$45,000
Scituate Town Hall	North/West	Scituate	\$9,240	\$9,240	\$13,860
The Steelyard	Providence	Providence	\$18,250	\$18,250	\$29,407
Providence Athenaeum	Providence	Providence	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$411,170
City Arts/Berkander Bldg	Providence	Providence	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$6,251,284
Helme House	South County	S. Kingstown	\$18,000	\$18,000	\$27,000
The Towers	South County	Narragansett	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$218,642
Woody Hill School	South County	Exeter	\$33,559	\$33,559	\$42,838
North Light	South County	Block Island	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$846,703
North Kingstown Town Hall	South County	N. Kingstown	\$35,365	\$35,365	\$200,000
Westerly Library	South County	Westerly	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$285,000
Varnum House Museum	West Bay	E. Greenwich	\$24,000	\$24,000	\$48,000
E. Greenwich Town Hall	West Bay	E. Greenwich	\$61,880	\$50,000	\$123,640
Warwick City Hall	West Bay	Warwick	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$690,550
			PROJECTS	\$1,055,278	\$12,450,212
			SIGNS	\$5,400	
			BOND COSTS	\$4,000	
			TOTAL	\$1,064,678	

2006 SPG REVIEW PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS DISTRIBUTION**AVAILABLE FUNDS: \$1,064,678**

	requested	requests	awarded	awards	total spent
SMALL	\$284,654	13	\$177,056	10	16.6%
LARGE	\$2,160,111	27	\$878,222	11	82.4%
SIGNS			\$5,400		.6%
BOND FEE			\$4,000		.4%
ALL	\$2,257,525	40	\$1,064,678	21	100.0%
BLACKSTONE VALLEY	\$270,000	4	\$200,000	2	18.8%
EAST BAY//ISLANDS	\$442,941	7	\$50,000	1	4.7%
NEWPORT	\$445,472	5	\$118,857	2	11.2%
NORTH/WEST	\$107,247	4	\$107,247	4	10.1%
PROVIDENCE	\$318,250	4	\$168,250	3	15.8%
SOUTH COUNTY	\$716,975	13	\$286,924	6	27%
WEST BAY	\$185,820	3	\$124,000	3	11.6%
SIGNS			\$5,400		.5%
BOND FEE			\$4,000		.3%
ALL	\$2,257,525	40	\$1,064,678	21	100.0%

2003-2006 cumulative awards

BLACKSTONE VALLEY	\$601,279
EAST BAY//ISLANDS	\$566,228
NEWPORT	\$1,088,651
NORTH/WEST	\$407,182
PROVIDENCE	\$1,072,184
SOUTH COUNTY	\$931,157
WEST BAY	\$348,056

Following discussion, on a motion by Mr. Grosvenor, seconded by Ms. Hagen, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the recommended list of State Preservation Grants.

6. Other business:

There was no other business.

7. Next meeting date: The next meeting of the Commission will be Wednesday, December 13, 2006.

8. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:30 A.M.

Minutes recorded by,

Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Attachment:

October 27, 2006

Mr. Joel Matthews
Director
Department of Planning & Development
169 Main Street
Woonsocket, RI 02895-4379

Re: Proposed Demolitions and Middle School Development Project
Hamlet Avenue and Villa Nova Street, Woonsocket

Dear Mr. Matthews:

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission staff has completed its review of the several packages of information you have provided concerning the city's proposed redevelopment of the Hamlet Avenue site with a pair of middle schools. These materials have provided us with sufficient information on the city's site selection process, the proposed school development program and the evaluation of the existing buildings and their potential for reuse. The results of our analysis are presented in the following advisory.

Affected Historic Resources

The site of the proposed school development presently contains two industrial complexes that are proposed for demolition, one on Hamlet Avenue and the other on Villa Nova Street. The complex on Hamlet Street is known historically as the Lafayette Worsted Company mills. The Lafayette Worsted Company, a Franco-Belgian firm that located in Woonsocket in 1889 at the invitation of Aram Pothier, was the first of the so-called French worsted mills that became a major component of Woonsocket's industrial base. The succession of mills they built on Hamlet Avenue grew to be one of the largest textile complexes in the city. The buildings on Hamlet Street comprise nearly all the major components of the complex including the multi-story brick Mills No. 1, No. 3 and No. 4, as well as two ornate office buildings of one and two stories. Despite the recent burning of Mill No.2, which was located behind Mill No. 4, the Lafayette Worsted Company complex is essentially intact and retains its historic integrity. It is our conclusion that the Lafayette Worsted Company complex should be considered eligible for listing on the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

The complex at 104 Villa Nova Street is also an early 20th century textile mill first occupied by the Loridan Worsted Mill and later by the Consolidated Print Works. Based on the limited information available, this mill appears to have played a minor role in Woonsocket's industrial history and to lack the historical significance to qualify for the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

Finding of Effect

The proposal to demolish these buildings would clearly result in the loss of significant historic resources at the Lafayette Worsted complex. Consequently, we have considered what measures are available to avoid or mitigate this effect.

Avoidance

We have reviewed materials documenting the city's site selection process. These materials adequately demonstrate the process by which the city selected the Hamlet Avenue site as the preferred one for meeting the need for two middle schools.

Potential for Adaptive Reuse

In order to determine whether there were alternatives that would avoid this adverse effect, we have considered the available information on potential for adapting the historic buildings for reuse. The evaluation of adaptive reuse of the historic industrial buildings focused on the Lafayette Worsted buildings. Based on our review of the available information and our inspection of Mills #1 and #3, we concluded that these buildings are essentially sound and capable of rehabilitation for reuse. The Villa Nova Street property was not considered a likely candidate for reuse due to its size, configuration, condition and limited historical significance.

Adaptive Reuse for School Purposes-The city's architectural consultant, L. Scott Dunlap, in his analysis of Mills #1, #3 and #4 concluded that their adaptation for school use would confront significant obstacles in meeting the goals and requirements of middle school design. These drawbacks include the multistory height of the buildings (four and five stories) which would inhibit the integration of school programs and activities, the number and close spacing of structural columns that would interfere with the layout of classrooms and other spaces, and the dimensions of the buildings, which create a large amount of floor space without direct daylight or ventilation. In addition, adapting these tall buildings to meet the codes for school use would require retrofitting circulation and other building systems at considerable expense. We have concluded from this analysis and our inspection of the buildings that adaptive reuse of the three mill buildings for school purposes is not a viable alternative.

Adaptive Reuse for Commercial Purposes - The physical character and condition of the Lafayette Worsted buildings make them good candidates for adaptive reuse for commercial purposes and their historical significance indicates that their rehabilitation could qualify for federal and state historic tax credits. However, we understand that the zoning requirements for a commercial rehabilitation of a complex this size (c. 6.5 acres of buildings) would require a significant amount of land for parking (an estimated 4.5 -5 acres at a minimum). If the redevelopment parcel

were to accommodate the school program, there would not be enough land available to meet the zoning requirements for a commercial rehabilitation as well.

Summary - We have concluded from our review that if the city and the Rhode Island Department of Education agree this site should be selected for the school program, the adaptive reuse of the Lafayette Worsted complex in conjunction with the school development would not be feasible.

Measures to Mitigate

In the absence of alternatives that would enable the preservation of the Lafayette Worsted complex under the city's development plan, we have considered what measures could mitigate the adverse effect resulting from the loss of these historic resources. The city's proposal to preserve two small buildings, the company office and company store, for school use would help mitigate the loss of the larger complex. Other measures that should be implemented are historical documentation and photo-recording of the complex for the Rhode Island Historic Resources Archive and the development of public educational materials on the company that could take the form of an interpretative exhibit.

In addition, one of the most effective ways the city could mitigate this loss would be to institute measures to preserve the French Worsted complex on the opposite side of Hamlet Avenue. These mills share in the same history and architectural character as the Lafayette Worsted mills and their importance as the monuments of a significant aspect of Woonsocket's history will only increase should the Lafayette Worsted mills be demolished.

These comments are provided in accordance with the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Act. If you have any questions please contact Richard Greenwood, Project Review Coordinator of this office.

Very truly yours,

Edward F. Sanderson
Executive Director
Deputy State Historic
Preservation Officer

Cc: Janet Durfee Hidalgo, Governor's Policy Office
Celeste Bilotti, RI Department of Education
Kevin Flynn, Statewide Planning Program

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