



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

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION  
February 10, 2010

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Robert E. Cusack  
Ms. Patrice O'Malley Hagan  
Mr. Michael Hebert, NR Review Board  
Mr. Karst Hoogeboom  
Dr. Patrick Malone  
Dr. Ronald Onorato  
Mr. Jared L. Rhodes, Chief of Statewide Planning representing Kevin Flynn, Asso. Dir  
Mr. Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director, representing Frederick Williamson SHPO

STAFF PRESENT

Mr. Jeffrey Emidy, Sr. Project Review Coordinator  
Dr. Richard Greenwood, Deputy Director  
Mr. Robert O. Jones, Sr. Architectural Historian

GUESTS

Ms. Adriana Thomas, House Policy Office

MEMBERS ABSENT

Dr. Michael Sullivan, Director DEM  
Mr. Robert Goff  
Mr. John Grosvenor, AIA  
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon  
Dr. Ronald Onorato  
Mr. J. Michael Saul, Interim Executive Director, EDC

## II. AGENDA

### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was convened at 9:40 A.M. In the absence of Mr. Williamson, Mr. Hoozeboom assumed the Chair.

### 2. Minutes of November 18, 2009

On a motion by Ms. Hagen, seconded by Dr. Onorato, the Commission unanimously VOTED to approve the Minutes of November 18, 2009.

#### Report of December 9, 2009

A quorum was not present on December 9, 2009 due to a winter storm. Commissioners who were present received a report from the Providence Revolving Fund and held a general discussion but conducted no official business. Instead of Minutes, a Report was filed. On a motion by Ms. Hagen, seconded by Dr. Onorato, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to accept the Report of December 9, 2009.

### 3. Director's Report

a) Financial Reports for State Fiscal Year 2009 were distributed that described activity in the Commission's various accounts during State Fiscal year 2009. The Commission's personnel and operating funds were approximately \$1,650,000. Legislative grants were \$190,000. One loan was closed for \$200,000.

b) A summary of the Staff annual work program was distributed and discussed.

c) The President's federal fiscal year 2010 budget request for state historic preservation offices is level with FY 2009. Elimination for Save America's Treasures restoration grants and Preserve America community grants is proposed. Funding for National Heritage Areas, like the Blackstone Heritage Corridor in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, also is proposed for reduction.

d) In the lawsuit regarding Salt Pond Archaeological Site, RIHPHC was represented in Federal Court on January 13, 2010 by the Office of the Rhode Island Attorney General. A RI Coastal Resources Management Council hearing on the project is scheduled for February 23, 2010.

### 4. National Register of Historic Places

Final Approval: Historic & Architectural Resources of Edgewood, Cranston Multiple Property Documentation Form

Richard Greenwood introduced the Edgewood Multiple Property Documentation. The format presents research about the Edgewood neighborhood in Cranston. The document describes the historical transitions of the area from colonial farms to 19<sup>th</sup>-century country estates and semi rural businesses to streetcar suburb and 20<sup>th</sup>-century automobile suburb. The Multiple Property Documentation establishes a context for evaluating specific historical and architectural resources. RIHPHC intends to present detailed research about each of several development plats within the Edgewood neighborhood for nomination to the National Register. The Taft Farm Residential Plat Historic District has already been nominated and listed. The Arnold Farm Residential Plat Historic District is ready to be nominated. Other nominations for individual plats will follow in the future.

Robert Jones presented information about the Edgewood Multiple Property Documentation.

Subtle changes in the nature of land disposition evolved during the 1790–1860 period which laid the framework for subsequent development. As before, farm tracts continued to be partitioned among heirs, and traded between family members and neighbors, but with somewhat different implications. As the descendants of colonial proprietors proliferated, the extensive estates of their forebears were broken up into progressively smaller parcels.

At mid-nineteenth century Edgewood began to assume a new position within metropolitan Providence. The borderland is that portion of the countryside which has been drawn into the sphere of the central city yet remains largely rural in character. It also has its own particular uses, devised to take advantage of the rustic landscape. Among these are garden cemeteries, resorts, and country estates. Edgewood takes on the nature of borderland at this time, with the appearance of those characteristic uses which serve as the forerunners of suburbanization.

As transit lines and parkland materialized, the entrepreneurial spirit flourished in Edgewood. With these amenities in place, and given the neighborhood's advantageous position in the expanding metropolitan area, property owners and investors anticipated a surge of interest in the area. From 1867 through 1891 they laid out about fifteen subdivisions. The presence of Roger Williams Park had an especially strong impact on development, directly influencing the layout of at least two plats: the Roger Williams Park Plat of 1872 (a replat of John Butts' 1870 replat of his 1856 subdivision) and the Williams Park Plat of 1873. In Edgewood, the particular configuration of the neighborhood resulted in an overall pattern of primary side streets running between or off of the area's major arterials—Broad Street, Park and Warwick Avenues, and Narragansett Boulevard—with secondary cross or dead-end streets arranged in practical fashion to create house lots desirable both to the developer and prospective purchasers.

The year 1892 marked a real watershed in the history of metropolitan Providence, and for the Edgewood neighborhood in particular. In January the city's first electric trolley commenced operation, and it just happened that the Broad Street line to Pawtuxet was singled out for this improvement. However, the advent of the automobile and its relatively rapid assimilation eventually had a greater impact on suburban development in metropolitan Providence, as elsewhere. The first practical automobile here intended for continuous operation appeared on Providence's streets in 1896, a year after the first European-built cars were offered for sale in the

United States. In 1904 767 autos and 117 motorcycles were registered; by 1910 there were 5,647 cars in the state. The introduction of the Ford Model T in 1908 as the first affordable mass-market vehicle contributed to the escalation of car ownership and usage nationwide. In 1909 a reporter for the *Providence Journal* remarked that "Motorcars have played an important part in transforming the resorts along the west shore [of Narragansett Bay] into suburbs.... [there are] still a few summer houses at Edgewood, but this is now a residential section."

Edgewood contains one of the best collections of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century domestic architecture within the greater Providence metropolitan area. The neighborhood's greatest period of growth, from about 1870 to World War II, coincides with the region's tremendous surge in population and prosperity. Most of the Edgewood's residential buildings are single-family houses.

Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Ms. Hagen, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the Historic & Architectural Resources of Edgewood, Cranston Multiple Property Documentation Form.

Final Approval: Arnold Farm Residential Plat Historic District, Edgewood, Cranston

Robert Jones presented the Arnold Farm Residential Plat Historic District nomination. The Arnold Farm Plat encompasses an area of about thirty-eight acres in east-central Edgewood. Once the nucleus of a sixty-acre farm cultivated by at least three generations of Arnolds, the property retained a distinctly rural character until subdivision for suburban development began in the late 1880s. Today the Arnold Farm Plat is a quiet suburban residential neighborhood of detached and semi-detached, single- and multi-family dwellings, set back on primarily large-sized, landscaped lots along broad tree-lined streets, with more intensive institutional and commercial uses ranged along Broad Street. The majority of the building stock dates from 1890 to 1930. The prevailing architectural types and styles within the area reflect this period of development, and range from modest contractor-built residences to multi-unit rental properties to imposing architect-designed homes for well-to-do professionals and businessmen.

Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Mr. Hebert, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the Arnold Farm Residential Plat Historic District.

Final Approval: Amendment to Church Hill Historic District (Union Wadding Mill, Goff Street), Pawtucket

Dr. Greenwood presented information about the Amendment. The Church Hill Historic District was nominated originally in 1982, and at that time the owner of the mill (which remained in active industrial production) requested to not be included in the national Register historic district. Now the factory is closed and the owner seeks National Register listing in order to

qualify for federal historic rehabilitation tax credits.

The Church Hill Historic District comprises an important part of the industrial heritage of the City of Pawtucket. The factories located here in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries relied on steam power rather than water power and on railroad transportation. The Union Wadding Mill buildings date from the 1870s and later.

Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Malone, seconded by Ms. Hagen, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the Amendment to Church Hill Historic District (Union Wadding Mill, Goff Street), Pawtucket.

Preliminary Consideration: 12 Woodbine Street, Providence

Dr. Greenwood presented information about the property. It is a well-preserved late 19<sup>th</sup>-century Italianate cottage. It fits the RIHPHC multi-property theme: single-family historic houses of Rhode Island.

Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Ms. Hagen, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to preliminary approval for 12 Woodbine Street, Providence.

Preliminary Consideration: Esten-Bowen House, 299 Iron Mine Hill Road, Burrillville

Dr. Greenwood presented information about the property. It is an early 19<sup>th</sup>-century center-chimney, five-bay farmhouse. It fits the RIHPHC multi-property theme: single-family historic houses of Rhode Island.

Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Ms. Hagen, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to preliminary approval for Esten-Bowen House, 299 Iron Mine Hill Road, Burrillville.

5. Other Business  
There was no other business.
6. Next meeting date: Wednesday March 17, 2010.
7. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:45 A.M.

Minutes recorded by,

Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director