



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

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION  
November 9, 2011

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Robert E. Cusack  
Mr. Robert Goff  
Mr. Michael Hebert, NR Review Board  
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon  
Dr. Ronald Onorato  
Mr. Jared L. Rhodes, Chief of Statewide Planning representing Kevin Flynn, Asso. Dir  
Edward F. Sanderson, State Historic Preservation Officer & Executive Director

STAFF PRESENT

Dr. Richard Greenwood, Deputy Director  
Ms. Mercedes Monteiro, National Register Assistant - Heritage Aide

GUESTS

Mr. Raymond Choiniere, House Policy Analyst  
Tom Goddard & Eric Hertfelder, Newport Restoration Foundation  
Virginia Branch & Andrew Pierson, Gately Building  
Clark Schoettle, Providence Revolving Fund/ Gately Building  
Phoebe Blake, Jewelry Mfg Historic District

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Janet Coit, Director DEM  
Mr. John Grosvenor, AIA  
Mr. Karst Hooeboom, Chairman  
John P. Leyden, State Building Commissioner  
Dr. Patrick Malone  
Mr. Pieter N. Roos  
Dr. Patricia Rubertone  
Mr. Keith Stokes, Executive Director, EDC  
1 Vacant

## II. AGENDA

### 1. Call to Order

The meeting was convened at 9:30 A.M. Mr. Goff presiding in place of Chairman Hoogeboom.

### 2. Minutes of September 14, 2011 & October 12, 2011

On a motion by Mr. Goff, seconded by Dr. Onorato, the Commission unanimously VOTED to approve the Minutes of September 14, 2011.

On a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Dr. Morenon, the Commission unanimously VOTED to approve the Minutes of October 12, 2011.

### 3. Executive Director's Report

a) Mr. Sanderson reported on the Preservation Awards Celebration held at the State House on October 14. Attendance was 249, including Governor Chafee who presented each award certificate to the winners.

b) Mr. Sanderson reported on a recent meeting Saturday November 5 with the State I-195 Redevelopment Commission, RIDOT Director Michael Lewis, EDC Director Keith Stokes, DEM Director Janet Coit, Governor's Chief-of-Staff Pat Rogers, and others to tour the project and provide background.

c) Mr. Sanderson reported on a violation of CRMC-RIHPHC approval to rehabilitate a historic house located at 23 Washington Street in Wickford Village, North Kingstown.

d) Mr. Sanderson reported that the U.S. Supreme Court has declined to hear an appeal of the Boston Circuit Court decision relating to the Salt Pond Archaeological Site case. The owner alleged a taking of his property, and the District and Circuit Courts both rejected the owner's claim and upheld RIHPHC and CRMC.

### 4. National Register of Historic Places

#### Final Approval: Providence Jewelry Manufacturing District Boundary Increase

Dr. Greenwood presented information about the National Register amendment, which was prepared for the City of Providence through a Certified Local Government Grant. The period of significance for the historic district extends from the erection of the first surviving residence to the date fifty years before the present date (2011) to encompass the historic resources that

contribute to the initial development of this neighborhood and its subsequent development as the center of the Providence jewelry industry from the late nineteenth century into the middle decades of the twentieth century. This revision of the original nomination incorporates as contributing buildings erected in the area from 1947 to 1954.

The Providence Jewelry Manufacturing Historic District is significant as a visually distinctive concentration of buildings related to the area's development from a predominantly residential neighborhood to the center of the Providence jewelry industry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Though late-nineteenth and early twentieth century brick and reinforced-concrete factories predominate in the district, there are also important examples of domestic and industrial architecture from the first half of the nineteenth century when the area was first developed as a part of Providence's West Side. The district also exhibits several early examples of the mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century steel-frame industrial buildings that were to become common in the post-World War II era.

The earliest of the jewelry factories are impressive five-, six-, and seven-story brick and heavy timber structures with pier and panel bearing walls, segmental-arched windows and corbelled cornices. The first was the Champlin Building (1888), followed by the Irons and Russell Building (1903) and the James Doran and Sons Building (1907) and they are clustered on Chestnut Street, at the northern end of the district. The Vesta Knitting Mills complex (1893, 1903) located on Imperial Place on the western side of the district, is similar in appearance, though it was built in part as a textile mill. The brick mill construction factories were followed by reinforced-concrete buildings, including Rhode Island's earliest examples of the mushroom column, flat-slab style of construction developed by C.A.P. Turner, the A.T. Wall Building (1910) and the Doran-Speidel Building (1912). The reinforced-concrete factories of the twenties exhibit curtain walls of brick and glass, accentuated in the case of the Little Nemo Building (1928) and the Coro Building (1929) by moderate Art Deco styling in their parapets. The Coro Building was particularly noteworthy at the time of its construction for the unprecedented amount of floor space devoted to one jewelry company's operation, 160,000 square feet. No significant construction occurred in the district during the years of the Great Depression and World War II.

Soon after the war, two two-story, steel frame, brick clad manufacturing buildings with horizontal bands of steel industrial sash were erected in the district: the Jewelry Manufacturing Building (1947) at 33 Bassett Street and the Claverick Building (Samuel Lerner, architect, 1948) at 161 Clifford Street. Both housed jewelry-related companies and are early examples of a type of industrial building that would become common in the post-war years. In 1956, Joseph A. Brian built a reinforced concrete building at 111 Chestnut Street for his jewelry and general industrial supply business. This two-story building features joist-slab technology, a refinement in concrete slab technology that utilized a series of shallow *T*-beams in the floor system.

In the 1970s and '80s, several of the district's larger industrial buildings were converted for residential or mixed uses that combined residential, professional or commercial use. These include the Champlin, Irons and Russell, A.T. Wall, and Coro Buildings. The Little Nemo Building and Doran Building (2) have been acquired by Brown University Medical School. The

Brian Supply Building has been converted to professional use. Among the larger buildings of the district, the Claverick Building and the Jewelry Manufacturing Building are vacant or near-vacant at present.

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

VOTED to approve the Providence Jewelry Manufacturing District Boundary Increase.

Final Approval: Gately Building, 337-353 Main Street, Pawtucket

Dr. Greenwood presented information about the property. The Gately Building, built in 1914, marks the western limit of Pawtucket's historic downtown expansion into an important commercial and civic center in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Built to accommodate the shopkeepers, small-scale entrepreneurs and rising professional class who were drawn to the prospering city, the building has a distinctive flat-iron form that resulted from the adaptation of an irregular village street pattern to the demands of robust urban development. It displays the salient features of the era's commercial architecture with a ground story devoted to retail storefronts and the upper stories to professional offices; an early example of steel framing, it is clad in brick with granite and marble trim and a moderate amount of Colonial Revival styling.

This is a three story, flat-roofed, steel frame, brick commercial building on a granite foundation built in 1914, with a flatiron shape that conforms to its triangular lot at the intersection of Main, Bayley and Dexter Streets on the western edge of Pawtucket's downtown. It features commercial storefronts on its two principal facades, composed of significant elements of the original cast iron fronts, finished with Colonial Revival treatments that date to the gradual (1935-1955) consolidation of the originally separate storefronts with recessed entries to a unified design to accommodate the first floor's sole use as a bank. Dating from the same period, green marble panels applied to a brick knee walls (exposed in some areas) are set below the first floor windows in the iron front. Second floor glass block window infill dates between 1939 and 1947. The first floor interior layout is essentially that of the 1955 adaptation of that floor for retail banking. The two upper floors are still subdivided into civic and professional offices, a use that continued from 1914 until 1986.

The nonprofit Pawtucket Citizens Development Corporation plans to rehabilitate the building in accordance with architectural plans presented by Virginia Branch, Durkee, Brown, Viveiros & Werenfels Architects.

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

VOTED to approve the Gately Building National Register nomination.

## 5. Report: Queen Anne Square project, Newport

Tom Goddard and Eric Hertfelder, members of the Board of Directors at The Newport Restoration Foundation presented information about the history of the Queen Anne Square Park site's development and alteration over time, including Urban Renewal clearance in the 1960s and 1970s when America's Cup Avenue was constructed and a parking garage was proposed for the site. In 1976, Doris Duke and the City of Newport created Queen Anne Square Park. Since 1976, wear and tear has resulted in a number of small changes to the park that cumulatively have changed its character. The Newport Restoration Foundation proposes to address these issues and to reinterpret Queen Anne Square as an attractive urban park and a place of contemplation to reflect on Newport's history and the contributions of Doris Duke in preserving historic Newport. NRF has commissioned the nationally known landscape designer Maya Lin to prepare plans for the work.

During the Commission's discussion, Mr. Sanderson noted that RIHPHC does not have a specific role in reviewing the proposed plans but has been invited by NRF to share some comments.

When commenting on projects, RIHPHC generally begins by identifying the significant historic properties in the project area. Queen Anne Square is located within the Newport National Historic Landmark District, and Trinity Church and a number of historic houses are adjacent to the park. Due to its relatively recent creation, the park itself has not been evaluated as a historic property. As finished in 1976, Queen Anne Square was an attractive setting for Trinity Church and an amenity for the neighborhood, but its design did not preserve or represent an actual historical space. The Commissioners commented that the project would have no adverse effects on any historic buildings and would meet the original goal of providing an attractive and appropriate setting within the historic district.

Dr. Greenwood reported on the 1970s archaeological studies that described archaeological artifacts and data that were recovered from the sites where moved historic houses were located. The reports document that portions of the land were thoroughly disturbed by previous buildings and by construction of the park. However, it is likely that some archaeological remains may survive intact in limited areas. Dr. Morenon suggested that the City and the Newport Restoration Foundation try to identify areas of archaeological sensitivity. Where no construction is planned archaeological materials may remain in place. If construction is planned for archaeologically sensitive areas, further investigation or construction monitoring may be appropriate. RIHPHC staff archaeologists should consult with NRF and the City.

The Commissioners did not evaluate recreational considerations of the park design as being outside RIHPHC's purview. However, Commissioners commented favorably on the quality of the landscape design presented in the NRF plans. The Commissioners believe the park will be a positive addition to the historic environment of Newport; while avoiding trying to literally recreate a historic replica, the design for Queen Anne Square will subtly evoke historical awareness.

On a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Mr. Cusack, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to send a letter to The Newport Restoration Foundation conveying the sense of the meeting.

6. Other business

There was no other business.

7. Next meeting date: Wednesday December 14, 2011.

8. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:57 A.M.

Minutes recorded by,



Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director