



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

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
September 12, 2012

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Robert E. Cusack
Mr. Robert Goff
Mr. John Grosvenor, AIA
Mr. Michael Hebert, NR Review Board
Mr. Karst Hoogeboom, Chairman
Dr. Patrick Malone
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon
Dr. Ronald Onorato
Mr. Pieter N. Roos
Dr. Patricia Rubertone
Edward F. Sanderson, State Historic Preservation Officer & Executive Director

STAFF PRESENT

Dr. Richard Greenwood, Deputy Director
Dr. Timothy Ives, Principal Archaeologist
Ms. Charlotte Taylor, Senior Archaeologist
Ms. Sarah Zurier, Sr. Special Projects Coordinator

GUESTS

Edward Connors, National Register consultant for Lymansville Co Mill
Richard Cardarelli, architect & Joseph Mollicone, owner's representative for
Lymansville Co Mill

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Janet Coit, Director DEM
John P. Leyden, State Building Commissioner
Mr. Jared L. Rhodes, Chief of Statewide Planning representing Kevin Flynn, Asso. Dir
Executive Director, EDC
1 Vacant

II. AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 A.M., Mr. Hoozeboom, Chairman, presiding.

2. Minutes of July 11, 2012

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

VOTED to approve the Minutes of July 11, 2012.

3. Executive Director's Report

a) Mr. Sanderson presented recommended selection criteria for the 2013 Certified Local Governments grants. Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Rubertone, seconded by Mr. Goff, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the selection criteria for the 2013 Certified Local Governments grants.

b) Dr. Greenwood reported that the National Park Service has approved the recent update to Rhode Island's state historic preservation plan. Dr. Greenwood will continue to work with Jared Rhodes at the Statewide Planning Program to incorporate the revised state historic preservation plan into the Rhode Island State Guide Plan.

c) Mr. Sanderson reported that RIHPHC staff are continuing to consult with the Navy regarding plans to install wind turbines on Navy land on Aquidneck Island. RIHPHC has expressed concern that some proposed turbines would adversely affect the visual context for significant historic properties. The National Park Service and the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation have joined RIHPHC in reviewing this project.

d) Ms. Zurier reported on plans for the 2013 Statewide Historic Preservation Conference. The conference date will be April 27 and the location will be West Warwick. Ms. Zurier encouraged Commissioners to send her their ideas and suggestions for conference topics and tours; she has scheduled meetings with local preservationists.

e) Ms. Monteiro reported on plans for the 35th annual State Heritage Festival which will be held on Saturday September 22 at Roger Williams National Memorial in Providence.

f) Mr. Sanderson distributed a fiscal report on RIHPHC expenditures during State Fiscal Year 2012.

4. National Register of Historic Places

Final Presentation: Lymansville Company Mill, 184 Woonasquatucket Avenue,
North Providence

Dr. Greenwood presented information about the property. The Lymansville Company Mill complex is the physical expression of more than seventy years of woolen worsted spinning, weaving, and finishing in North Providence, Rhode Island. It is significant on the state level under National Register Criterion A for its association with worsted manufacture in the late 19th- and early 20th-century, when Rhode Island was a leader in that branch of the textile industry. The mill was designed and operated by A. Albert Sack (1843-1925), who learned the woolen and worsted trades in his native Germany, worked his way through the ranks of several New England textile firms, and established himself as a successful worsted entrepreneur in the late 1870s. Constructed by the newly-formed Lymansville Company in 1884, expanded and improved by successive owners, the Lymansville Company Mill exemplifies the rise of Rhode Island's woolen and worsted industry to a preeminent status in the state's dominant textile economy.

The Lymansville Company Mill is significant on the state level under Criterion C as a fine example of late 19th- and early 20th-century architecture of the New England woolen and worsted industry. The Lymansville Company plant features the representative architectural characteristics of Rhode Island worsted mills of the late 19th and early-20th centuries. These include the forms, materials, construction and arrangement of the mill buildings. The core buildings are brick, multi-story structures with shallow pitched gable roofs and pier and spandrel walls that accommodate regular rows of tall windows with segmental-arched heads. (Although the original multi-pane wooden sash have been replaced, the pattern of tall paired windows flanking a central mullion in each opening is intact.) Exterior ornament is very minimal, confined to the corbelled cornice on the stair tower and carved rafter ends. The interior framing is heavy timber or mill construction which features heavy wooden beams and columns supporting solid plank floors, all designed to be fire-resistive. The external stair towers provide additional fire protection by housing the vertical circulation outside of the main interior spaces. The interiors are typically open plan, with parallel rows of columns, painted brick walls, and metal-sheathed fire doors separating the passageways between sections.

The Lymansville Company Mill is a complex of connected worsted manufacturing and finishing buildings sited on a ten-acre lot on a bend in the Woonasquatucket River in the southwest corner of North Providence, Rhode Island. The complex comprises seven major buildings, predominantly brick, ranging in height from one to three stories all built by the Lymansville Company. Four buildings constructed between 1884 and 1887 serve as the core around which are arrayed a number of additions and new buildings erected through the mid-twentieth century. The complex is located on the east bank of the river on the site of a cotton factory established by Judge Daniel Lyman in 1807. The Lymansville Company Mill complex includes elements of the water power system that was in operation until ca. 1942. The concrete and masonry Lymansville Dam still impounds a substantial pond on the river. Portions of the headrace and tailrace next to

the mill complex are intact, though dry, while the other sections have been filled. The river bounds the mill property on the south and west; Woonasquatucket Avenue which is the main street of the adjoining village of Lymanville is the major boundary on the north and east. The original core of Lymanville was multi-family housing built by the Lyman Company in the 19th century. A number of these houses remain, along with many late 19th and early 20th century privately-built houses on streets north and east of the mill complex including Sack Street and Lyman Avenue.

In 1944 the Lymanville plant was sold to Mack Kahn, owner of several textile mills operating under the name Kanmak Mills, which included the Amoskeag Mill (Manchester, NH) and the Kanmak Mill (Kulpmont, PA). By 1950, Kahn had carried out a thorough modernization program for the nearly 60-year-old mill, replacing 90% of the mill machinery. Kahn's main contribution to the physical evolution of the plant was the construction of a new, 10,000 sq. ft. Dye House (Building No. 6) in 1951. This \$2 million investment increased Lymanville's piece dyeing capacity to 2000 units per week. Interviewed at the time, Kahn spoke of the transformation "...of an aging mill into a modern, integrated operation able to meet the competition of mills anywhere in the world." Kahn asserted that this integration—from raw wool to finished product—permitted his mills to operate on a narrower profit margin at each stage of production than non-integrated mills. (However, integration was not new at the Lymanville mill, which had been established as an integrated plant by A. Albert Sack.)

Kahn's investment at Lymanville was a calculated risk, as the New England woolen and worsted industry was continuing to decline in the face of several trends. One trend was the development of new blended wool and synthetic cloth which was cheaper to make and supplanting worsteds in the marketplace. Another was the development of the worsted industry in the South in the late 1940s. The New England worsted companies now faced the same problem of competition from modern facilities run with cheaper labor that the cotton industry had experienced a generation earlier. The situation was also exacerbated by a generally weak consumer economy.

While there were initial signs that Kahn's strategy was working, as employment at the plant rose from 415 operatives in 1950 to 650 in 1954, the Lymanville Company experienced serious financial difficulties and was idled and put up for sale in the early summer of 1956. The plant's 650 operatives lost their jobs. Kahn lost his bet on the future of worsted production at Lymanville, and his investments in new production at the mill came to naught. Kanmak, unable to secure a buyer willing to operate Lymanville as a worsted mill, decided in March 1957 to sell the plant's new equipment piecemeal. The former textile plant was purchased in late 1957 by the Ronci Realty Company and leased to a variety of tenants, most of whom were involved in costume jewelry and related manufacture. Ronci held the property until its purchase by Theta Properties in 1987. But for the occupation of Mill No. 4 by jewelry manufacturer Fernando Originals, the plant is now vacant. The owners are planning the rehabilitation of the plant for residential use.

During discussion, Commissioners agreed that the Lymanville Mill possesses historical significance, but Dr. Onorato and Mr. Grosvenor questioned the historical significance of the mill's later additions made between 1951 and its closing in 1957. Dr. Greenwood replied that the period of significance for the National Register nomination continues to the mill's closing in 1957, and therefore the late additions and alterations are technically within the period of significance. Dr. Malone agreed that the property as a "production system" continued to 1957; however he stated that the additions and alterations did not contribute to the mill's historical character and visual appearance. Dr. Malone also noted that the mill is not being nominated for its failure in the 1950s, but rather its significance is its industrial success from the late 19th century to the 1940s.

Mr. Grosvenor asked about the physical condition of the mill and potential environmental hazards? Dr. Greenwood and National Register Consultant Connors replied that there are some condition issues that are being evaluated, and the state Department of Environmental Management has cited the new dye house for environmental hazard, particularly for contamination underneath the dye house building.

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

VOTED to approve the National Register nomination for the Lymanville Mill and to express three concerns:

1. The post-1951 alterations and additions are of minor significance and were only briefly in service.
2. The post-1951 alterations and additions are not in keeping with the architectural character of the historic mill.
3. Physical and environmental conditions may have compromised the physical integrity of some portions of the mill complex.

5. Report on Archaeology and Warwick sewers project

Ms. Taylor reported that since the 1990s RIHPHC staff archaeologists have been reviewing a series of sewer improvements in Warwick. With archaeological monitoring, construction has successfully avoided impacting significant archaeological sites until recently. In 2006 the sewers project reached the Bay View Neighborhood south of Conimicut Point, and archaeologists from the PAL have identified a large and complex site that was occupied for at least 2000 years before the arrival of the Europeans. The site appears to be a significant Native American settlement. A large number of features and stone tools have been discovered, including post molds indicating the presence of wigwam structures. Three probable human burial features have been found, and additional human burials would be expected in a village context. Although no European colonial artifacts have been found, the Bay View area may have been an important village of the Shawomet, under their sachem Pomham, in the 17th century.

RIHPHC staff are consulting with Warwick officials and with representatives of the Narragansett Indian Tribe to consider sewer construction alternatives that would avoid or minimize impacts to this large archaeological site. Construction impacts could result from excavation and installation of a main sewer line along Tidewater Drive, and additional impacts could result from excavation and installation of feeder lines in the neighborhood streets and even from installation of sewer lines to individual houses. Directional drilling and use of pressurized sewer lines potentially could reduce the amount of ground disturbance.

The Bay View site appears to be one of several large Native American settlements that have been located in Rhode Island. Other settlements include Providence Covelands (downtown Providence), Jamestown Archaeological District (Jamestown Village), and the Salt Pond Site (Narragansett). There also is evidence for additional potential settlements: Tiverton shoreline, Kingston, and possibly Nipsachuck (North Smithfield). The accumulating evidence of Native American settlements, strongly supported by the discoveries at the Salt Pond Site, is changing archaeologists' understanding of Rhode Island's pre-European history.

6. Other business

There was no other business.

7. Next meeting date: Wednesday October 10, 2012.

8. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:25 A.M.

Minutes recorded by,



Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director