



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
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MINUTES
RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
June 11, 2014

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Michael Abbott, AIA
Mr. Al Cocce, AIA, representing John P. Leyden, State Building Commissioner
Ms. Morgan Devlin
Mr. Mohamad Farzan, AIA
Mr. Karst Hoozeboom, Chairman
Dr. Patrick Malone
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon
Dr. Ronald Onorato
Mr. Pieter N. Roos
Mr. Clark Schoettle
Mr. Jonathan Stevens, State Historic Preservation Officer

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Joanna Doherty, Senior Architectural Historian
Mr. Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director & Deputy SHPO
Ms. Sarah Zurier, Sr. Special Projects Coordinator

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Janet Coit, Director DEM
Ms. Caitlin Greeley, Statewide Planning, representing Kevin Flynn
Dr. Omur Harmansah
Mr. Michael Hebert, NR Review Board
Mr. Marcel Valois, Executive Director EDC

GUESTS

Alisa Augustine, National Register consultant
Katharine Cavanaugh, National Register consultant
Dan Drazen & Chris Stanley, Trinity Financial
Jeremiah O'Grady, Olneyville Housing Corporation
Kaity Ryan, Preservation Society of Newport County
Gloria Schmidt & Marjorie Webster, Portsmouth Historical Society

II. AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 A.M., Karst Hoozeboom, Chairman, presiding.

2. Minutes of May 14, 2014

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

VOTED to approve the Minutes of May 14, 2014.

3. Executive Director's Report: Edward F. Sanderson

a) Mr. Sanderson asked Commissioner Devlin to report on the status of legislation to fund state historic preservation tax credits in the FY 2015 State Budget. Ms. Devlin reported that the House budget proposal does not include Governor Chafee's recommendation for \$50 million in additional funding. Preserve Rhode Island and Grow Smart RI have been coordinating advocacy for the tax credit funding, and copies of a statement by PRI and GSRI were distributed.

b) Commissioner Devlin and Ms. Zurier reported on a proposed state bond issue introduced by Governor Chafee to fund \$5 million in preservation grants and \$30 million for capital projects at a nine performance arts historic venues. Preserve Rhode Island is leading the advocacy for the bond issue. The House budget proposal includes the arts and cultural bond issue.

c) Mr. Sanderson reported that work has begun to restore The Breakers Boiler House and Gate House. This project was discussed during the Commission's review and approval of the proposed Welcome Center last year. The Welcome Center project is on hold pending local approvals, but the work to restore the underground Boiler House and the Gate House has been reviewed in detail by RIHPHC staff in accordance with the historic preservation easement we hold and is underway.

The Boiler House and Gate House are original historic features of The Breakers mansion, and the work being performed is necessary and appropriate to preservation of these features.

Concern has been expressed about the temporary construction access. A previously damaged section of the perimeter wall along Shepard Avenue will be removed during construction. When the work is complete, the wall will be restored to match its historic appearance. The primary landscape impact of the construction access will be the removal of several stands of rhododendrons planted within the last 10 or 15 years and some Cypress shrubs that all will be replaced. In addition, one dead Birch tree will be removed and one 10 year old Norway Maple will be removed. The access way will be fenced to protect the surrounding landscape; topsoil

will be removed and stockpiled to be returned; temporary crushed gravel will help protect the soil from compaction.

Two large Beech trees must be removed from the Boiler House site in order to gain access for construction. The Beech trees were planted in 1939 and 1957 are not historic landscape features. In order to remove these two trees, Bartlett Tree Experts will bring their equipment through the Shepard Avenue gate and cross the lawn avoiding impacts to specimen trees or landscape features.

4. Report: State Historic Preservation Officer's Report: Jonathan Stevens

a) Mr. Stevens reported on opening a new exhibit gallery in the basement of the State House. The space has been painted and track lighting has been installed. The inaugural exhibit consists of photographs taken at the State House revealing the range of activities hosted at the capitol and the diversity of people to work, legislate, or advocate at the building.

b) Governor Chafee has nominated Ruth Taylor to serve as a member of the RIHPHC. Ms. Taylor is the Executive Director of the Newport Historical Society which houses archives, a museum collection, and operates several historic sites. Ruth has been active in historic preservation in Newport, and she has extensive experience in managing nonprofit organizations.

c) New "Welcome to Beautiful Rhode Island" signs have been erected on state highways entering Rhode Island. Several Commissioners commented on the signs' excellent design and pleasing appearance.

5. National Register of Historic Places

Preliminary Consideration: Sarah Jane Eddy House, Portsmouth

Joanna Doherty presented information about the property and Sarah Jane Eddy.

The Sarah J. Eddy house is located on the east side of Bristol Ferry Road, just south of the Mount Hope Bridge. It is a ca. 1896, 2.5-story, wood-frame, Queen Anne-style residence with a complex roof plan, ample porches and wood-shingle siding. A three-story octagonal tower rises at the building's northwest corner. The residence faces west, and at the time of its construction would have enjoyed views of Narragansett Bay. Originally a single-family residence, the building is currently divided into apartments (one on the first floor, two on the second, and one on the third). The exterior retains a relatively high level of integrity. Fenestration remains largely unchanged and most of the historic window sash remains, though some balcony doorways have been removed or filled in. The roof form is as-built, though a decorative balustrade has been removed. The first-story porches on the west façade have been enclosed, but the historic railings survive (those at the second-story porches and on the rear elevation do not). The interior has been compromised somewhat with the division of the house into apartments, though much of the

original floor plan remains. Significant interior details, like the main staircase, several fireplaces, and window and door trim are extant.

Sarah J. Eddy was an accomplished painter, sculptor and photographer who built her home on Bristol Ferry Road around 1896. She was born in Boston in 1851 to James Eddy, a Providence native who became a successful engraver and art dealer, and Eliza Francis Jackson Merriam, an active abolitionist and suffragist. Eddy moved with her family to Providence after the Civil War and studied painting and sculpture at the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and the Art Students' League of New York, probably in the 1870s. She had returned to Providence by 1880, where she became active in the Providence Art Club (est. 1880). In 1883, she painted an oil-on-canvas portrait of Frederick Douglass, reportedly the only formal portrait for which he ever sat. She hosted Susan B. Anthony at her home in Portsmouth for 3.5 weeks in the fall of 1901, painting two portraits of her. One, which depicts Anthony receiving flowers from children on her eightieth birthday, has been in the collection of the Smithsonian since 1919, and was the first object acquired by the Smithsonian to document the women's suffrage cause. Eddy was an accomplished photographer, exhibiting locally, nationally and internationally from around 1890 to at least 1910. One of her photos was included in a salon in Washington, DC in 1896; the Smithsonian's newly established Section of Photography acquired 50 prints from that show, including Eddy's, constituting the first major purchase of art photography by any museum in the country. Eddy exhibited at two important international shows in 1900-1901: the "New School of American Photography" exhibit in London, organized by F. Holland Day, and an exhibit of American women photographers at the Paris Exposition, curated by Frances Benjamin Johnston. Eddy was also active at the local and national levels in the women's rights and animal welfare causes. She died at her home in Portsmouth in 1945.

Following discussion of Ms. Eddy's remarkable history, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Mr. Abbott, the Commission unanimously

VOTED preliminary approval for the nomination.

Preliminary Consideration: Rochambeau Worsted Mill, 60 King Street, Providence

Ms. Doherty introduced Alisa Augustine, National Register consultant, who presented information about the property.

The Rochambeau Worsted mill is located off Manton Avenue just north of the site of the former Riverside Mill worsted mill. The mill was built in 1923 by the Lepoutre family of France who had begun investing in worsted production in Woonsocket at the turn of the century. In the early 1920s, they and other French investors expanded their operations with several new mills. In addition to building in Woonsocket, the Lepoutres chose to build in the Olneyville section of Providence, reportedly due to the increase in French Canadian workers there. They employed Walter Fontaine, a Woonsocket architect, who had also designed the French Worsted Mills in Hamlet. The company succeeded and remained in operation into the 1950s, a period that saw the

general decline of RI's worsted industry.

In 1963, Imperial Knife Co. acquired the mill as an adjunct to their main operation in Providence's Jewelry Manufacturing District. Rochambeau Mill became the company's main production plant after they closed the downtown mill in the 1970s. The mill consists of an intact 3-story plant with a number of 1-story additions made by Rochambeau and one by Imperial Knife c. 1963.

The property's associations with the French worsted industry are the primary argument for its eligibility under Criterion A, while its association with the prominent local industry, Imperial Knife, is a second area of importance. As a work of industrial architecture, the mill deserves consideration under Criterion C.

During discussion, Dr. Malone stated that Rochambeau Mill is significant for its role in the later stages of Rhode Island's worsted textile industry and as an example of the mill architecture of Walter Fontaine. On a motion by Dr. Malone, seconded by Dr. Onorato, the Commission unanimously

VOTED preliminary approval for the nomination.

6. Rhody Award Nominations

Ms. Zurier presented the following 2014 Rhody Award nominations for approval by the Commission:

Downing Award for Volunteer Service: Fred Faria, Scituate Preservation Society
Williamson Award for Professional Service: Carol Nelson, Director RI Catholic Diocesan Facilities
Tyson Award for Preservation Craftsmanship: Michael St. Angelo, mason

Preservation Projects:
Poirier's Diner, Providence
Anthony Mill, Coventry
The Arcade, Providence
Warwick City Hall
Tillinghast House, Providence
Rose Island Lighthouse, Newport Harbor
Diocese House – The Dean Hotel, Providence

Following discussion, on a motion by Mr. Farzan, seconded by Ms. Devlin, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the 2014 awards.

7. Next regular meeting date: Wednesday July 9, 2014 at 9:30 AM.
8. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:25 A.M.

Minutes recorded by,



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