



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
Old State House 150 Benefit Street Providence, RI 02903

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MINUTES
RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
July 8, 2015

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Michael Abbott, AIA
Ms. Morgan Devlin
Mr. Mohamad Farzan, AIA
Ms. Caitlin Greeley, Statewide Planning, representing Kevin Flynn
Mr. Michael Hebert, NR Review Board
Ms. Lisa Lee representing Janet Coit, Director DEM
Dr. Patrick Malone
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon
Mr. Edward F. Sanderson, State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. Clark Schoettle

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Joanna Doherty, Principal Architectural Historian
Mr. Jeffrey Emidy, Principal Project Review Coordinator
Ms. Virginia Hesse, Principal Historical Architect
Dr. Timothy Ives, Principal Archaeologist
Ms. Michaela Jergensen, Senior Reviewer RIDOT Projects
Ms. Katherine Jurczyk, Senior Grants Coordinator
Ms. Sarah Zurier, Principal Special Projects Coordinator

MEMBERS ABSENT

Mr. Al Cocce, AIA, representing John P. Leyden, State Building Commissioner
Ms. Janet Coit, Director DEM
Mr. Darin Early, COO, Commerce RI
Mr. Karst Hoogeboom, Chairman
Dr. Ronald Onorato
Mr. Pieter N. Roos
Ms. Ruth Taylor

GUESTS

Ms. Valerie Talmage, Preserve RI
Mr. Brent Runyon, Providence Preservation Society
Ms. Katherine Cavanaugh, National Register Consultant
Mr. Kris Van Den Bossche

II. AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 A.M., Dr. Morenon presiding in the absence of Chairman Hoogeboom.

2. Minutes of June 10, 2015

On a motion by Mr. Abbott, seconded by Ms. Devlin, the Commission unanimously VOTED to approve the Minutes of June 10, 2015.

3. Executive Director's Report

a) A newspaper clipping for the ribbon cutting at Harris Mill historic rehabilitation project was distributed.

b) A letter addressed to the RI Secretary of Commerce and Chief of Commerce RI regarding regulations for Governor Raimondo's "Rebuild RI" was distributed.

4. Loan Committee Report

At the Commission's June 10, 2015 meeting, the Loan Committee reported on a loan application from Preserve Rhode Island for rehabilitation of the historic Chace Farmhouse owned by the Town of Lincoln on Great Road. The loan request was for \$45,815 for interior renovations to two residential apartments. The Loan Committee generally supported the proposed project, but had several questions regarding

- How the loan will be structured and how PRI intends to secure the loan by pledging its own assets.
- Whether the Town of Lincoln will grant a preservation easement or other assurance of preservation in the future.
- How PRI will manage and construct the project.
- Whether PRI might consider a larger project that would include reconstruction of historic exterior features.

Commissioners encouraged the Loan Committee to follow up with PRI in order to bring a final proposal for approval to the July 8 meeting. On June 17, 2015 Commissioner Schoettle and RIHPHC staff met with Valerie Talmage, Executive Director of PRI to follow up on the outstanding issues. It was mutually agreed that Val would discuss with Town officials and the PRI Board whether to expand the project to include exterior restoration in addition to interior renovation, preservation agreements, and financial assurances. Val also agreed to investigate the scope of work and cost of additional exterior restoration work. RIHPHC proposed that an

additional \$50,000 loan might be committed to the exterior phase of work, and agreed to consider allowing the additional loan funds to be held in reserve until the interior work was completed.

There has not been time for PRI to revise its loan application, and the Commission does not plan to meet again until September 9 which could delay the project. On a motion by Mr. Abbott, seconded by Ms. Lee, the Commission

VOTED to approve the PRI – Chace Farmhouse loan in concept for an amount not to exceed \$100,000, and the Commission delegated authority to review and approve final loan details to the Executive Director in consultation with the Commission’s Loan Committee.

5. Approval of 2015 State Preservation Grant Regulations

Mr. Sanderson reported that updated regulations for the State Preservation Grants Program were posted for public comment on May 12, 2015. The 2015 regulations closely follow the earlier 2003 and 2005 SPG regulations. Commissioners were briefed on the proposed SPG regulation amendments at Commission meetings on January 14 and again on June 10. Public information workshops were held on April 25 and June 3. A public hearing was held on June 12.

Two written public comments were received regarding the Regulations’ definition of “Public Historic Site.” The Executive Director of the Providence Preservation Society (PPS) stated concern in a letter dated May 29, 2015 that “the intent of the rules is that only historic sites which are also museums and sites conventionally considered performance venues will be considered for these grants.” The executive Director of Preserve Rhode Island (PRI) stated in a letter dated June 9, 2015 that “the standard of being open to the public 12 days a year for Public Historic Sites narrows the scope beyond the legislative intent for this new program.” The PRI letter also offers the policy recommendation that “If RIHPHC is able to help with capital repairs for a broader range of historic properties than those in museum use, the quality of place of Rhode Island will be better served.” Copies of the PPS and PRI letters were distributed.

The definition of “Public Historic Site” in the proposed regulations is:

“PUBLIC HISTORIC SITE - A historic structure open to the general public that is used principally for events and activities of broad community interest and that is widely recognized as being representative of the community’s heritage. At a minimum, the public historic site must be open to the public twelve (12) days per year.”

Mr. Sanderson reviewed the history of the definitions back to 2003 and 2005 regulations, summarized the 2014 Bond language, and recommended that historic sites that receive State Preservation Grants should be open to the public.

Sarah Zurier reported that the regulations adopted by the RI State Council on the Arts to administer their portion of the Bond require public access to any facilities assisted with Bond funds.

Valerie Talmage, Executive Director of Preserve RI, was invited to speak. Ms. Talmage was surprised to find that PRI and RIHPHC had different understandings of what historic properties would be eligible for SPG grants. In her conversations with Jonathan Stevens in Governor Chafee's office and in PRI's informal needs assessment survey she had assumed a broad definition on eligibility to apply for SPG grants and evaluation of individual projects using criteria to target funding to the most worthy projects. As explained in the PRI letter, she feels that preservation of all historic buildings has value, and that eligibility for SPG grants should not be restricted by to sites open to the public.

Brent Runyon, Executive Director of the Providence Preservation Society also was invited to speak. Mr. Runyon supported PRI's statement, and he also felt that the bond issue had been promoted as not being restricted to historic sites open to the public.

Ms. Lee noted that the Department of Environmental Management emphasizes "general public" access when administering State funds to projects.

Mr. Abbott suggested that twelve days per year could be flexible; it could mean one day every month, or it could mean that a site might be open for several days at intervals during the year.

Ms. Devlin drew a distinction between sites that are open to the public such as nonprofit offices, versus sites that hold events and activities for general public attendance.

Mr. Schoettle suggested that it should not be too difficult for sites to offer public access even if they did not offer public programming at the site. The organization could post information on a website inviting visitors; a brochure or simple exhibit about the site could be available to visitors, informal tours could be provided on request, etc.

Dr. Malone felt twelve days per year was not an onerous burden for sites to be open.

Mr. Farzan thought "every case is different," and he felt the definition did not need to be changed if reasonable accommodation could be made for particular cases.

Dr. Morenon would like RIHPHC to encourage the public to visit historic sites and should not support reasons to exclude the public.

Ms. Lee offered a motion to approve the SPG regulations as drafted, and the motion was seconded by Mr. Abbott. During discussion of the motion, Mr. Abbott observed it is difficult to encompass the wide variety of sites in a single definition, and he hoped there would be some

flexibility in applying the definitions. Mr. Schoettle suggested two edits to the definition of Public Historic Site: delete the word “principally” and change “events and activities” to “events or activities.”

“PUBLIC HISTORIC SITE - A historic structure open to the general public that is used [principally] for events [and] or activities of broad community interest and that is widely recognized as being representative of the community’s heritage. At a minimum, the public historic site must be open to the public twelve (12) days per year.”

Mr. Schoettle said these edits would make the application of the definition a little more flexible.

Ms. Lee and Mr. Abbott accepted Mr. Schoettle’s changes, and the Commission

VOTED to approve the 2015 State Preservation Grant Regulations.

Voting in favor of the motion were Commissioners Abbott, Farzan, Malone, Morenon, Lee, Sanderson, and Schoettle. Voting in opposition to the motion were Commissioners Devlin and Greeley.

Mr. Sanderson distributed a statement of Evaluation Criteria for Proposed SPG Projects. He explained that the Commission appointed a SPG Review Panel at the June 10 meeting to carefully review and evaluate every application, and then to present recommendations for RIHPHC approval. The Evaluation Criteria are the same as used for previous SPG grant application review, and the Criteria represent the Commission’s direction to the Review Panel. On a motion by Mr. Abbott, seconded by Dr. Malone, the Commission

VOTED to approve the Evaluation Criteria for Proposed SPG Projects (copy appended to these Minutes).

6. National Register of Historic Places

Ms. Doherty introduced National Register consultant Katherine Cavanaugh who prepared the nominations. The project was funded by a Certified Local Government grant awarded by RIHPHC to the City of East Providence. Property owners and the public were informed about the nominations by mail and a public information meeting was held. The City of East Providence supports both nominations.

Final Approval: Elm Tree Plat Historic District, East Providence

Ms. Cavanaugh presented information about the historic district. The Elm Tree Plat Historic District represents the rapid development of suburban housing in the Riverside neighborhood of

East Providence in the early to mid-20th century. Recorded in 1924, the Elm Tree Plat now contains fifty-three single-family houses and one commercial building arrayed in a three block area on Charlotte Street, Elinora Street, and Harvey Avenue between Willett Avenue and Fenner Avenue. The subdivision was modeled on a streetcar suburb with a regular grid of streets and standard-sized house lots, but was built out as automobiles became more common, so most houses have associated garages (thirty-eight in total, nine non-contributing). The pace of housing construction in the district was remarkably rapid: forty-four houses were constructed between 1925 and 1930, and another four between 1931 and 1935. Of these, more than half (twenty-seven houses) were built by the plat's original developers, Severin Carlson and Carl E. Anderson; and all but two of the rest were built speculatively by other investors. The district also has three houses constructed between ca. 1833-ca. 1910, and two houses built between 1943 and 1953. (The commercial building is non-contributing, as are two houses built during the period of significance, due to the extent of alterations.) All of the housing stock is wood frame, and 1 to 2 stories tall. By far the most predominant housing type is the Bungalow, although the district also contains a few examples of Cape Cod and English Cottage styles. Despite some alterations to individual buildings, the district as a whole has good integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The Elm Tree Plat Historic District represents the final decades of a century-long trend that saw the Riverside section of East Providence evolve from a sparsely settled rural area in the mid-19th century, to a suburban neighborhood by the mid-20th century. This transformation was related to the growth of nearby Providence into a densely settled and heavily industrialized metropolitan area, which promoted suburban development in outlying areas, facilitated by a concurrent evolution in transportation, from trains to electric streetcars to automobiles. The Elm Tree Plat, recorded in 1924, lay within walking distance of a streetcar line and followed the model of a streetcar suburb, with a regular grid pattern of streets and standard-sized house lots; its original developers built at least half of the housing stock here, evidently with the intent to sell to owner-occupants. The district contains good examples of several types and styles of domestic architecture prevalent in the early 20th century, most predominantly Bungalow, but also Cape Cod and English Cottage. The period of significance is ca. 1833 to 1953, representing the district's transition from a farmstead that had been owned by multiple generations of the same family (which built the earliest surviving house here), to a suburban residential neighborhood; the vast majority of buildings were constructed between 1925 and 1933.

During discussion, Dr. Malone commented on the choice of "Elm Tree Plat" as the name of the residential area and referred to the book, "Republic of Shade: New England and the American Elm," by Thomas J. Campenella. On a motion by Mr. Farzan, seconded by Mr. Abbott, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the nomination.

Final Approval: Rose Land Park Plat Historic District, East Providence

Ms. Cavanaugh presented information about the historic district. The Rose Land Park Plat Historic District represents the rapid development of suburban housing in the Riverside neighborhood of East Providence in the early to mid-20th century. Recorded in 1928, the Rose Land Park Plat now contains thirty-nine single-family houses, arrayed in three blocks on Dartmouth Avenue, Florence Street, Princeton Avenue, the south side of Roseland Court and the west side of Willett Avenue. The subdivision was modeled on a streetcar suburb with a regular grid of streets and standard-sized house lots, but was built out as automobiles became more common. Consequently, several houses in the district were built with attached garages, and many have detached garages (twenty-three in total, five non-contributing). The pace of housing construction in the district was remarkably rapid: thirty-three houses (85%) were constructed between 1929 and 1939, and another four in the 1940s and 1950s. Over three-quarters (thirty-two) of the houses in the district were built by the plat's original developers, Severin Carlson and Carl E. Johnson (and their wives), and all but one of the rest were built speculatively by other investors. (The district also has one ca. 1900 farmhouse, and one non-contributing house, built ca. 1979.) All of the housing stock is wood frame, often with brick, stone, or stucco accents, and typically 1-1/2 to 2 stories tall. The most predominant architectural style is English Cottage, but the district also contains examples of Cape Cod and various Colonial Revival styles. Despite some alterations to individual buildings, the district as a whole has very good integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

The Rose Land Park Plat Historic District represents the final decades of a century-long trend that saw the Riverside section of East Providence evolve from a sparsely settled rural area in the mid-19th century, to a suburban neighborhood by the mid-20th century. This transformation was related to the growth of nearby Providence into a densely settled and heavily industrialized metropolitan area, which promoted suburban development in outlying areas, facilitated by a concurrent evolution in transportation, from trains to electric streetcars to automobiles. The Rose Land Park Plat, recorded in 1928, lay within walking distance of a streetcar line and followed the model of a streetcar suburb, with a regular grid pattern of streets and standard-sized house lots; its original developers built about three-quarters of the housing stock here, evidently with the intent to sell to owner-occupants. The district contains good examples of several types and styles of domestic architecture prevalent in the early to mid-20th century, most predominantly English Cottage, Cape Cod, and Colonial Revival. The period of significance is ca. 1900 to 1957, representing the district's transition from a farmstead that had been owned by multiple generations of the same family (which built the earliest surviving house here), to a suburban residential neighborhood; the vast majority of buildings were constructed between 1929 and 1939.

On a motion by Mr. Farzan, seconded by Mr. Abbott, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the nomination.

Preliminary Consideration: Jacob D. Babcock House, 20 High Street, Ashaway
(Hopkinton)

Ms. Doherty and Ms. Jergensen presented information about the property. The Jacob D. Babcock House consists of a ca. 1778, timber-frame, two-story, side-gable, five-bay by three-bay main block with a center chimney and two mid-19th c. additions (a two-story rear ell and a one-story store extending off the basement level of the west elevation). The Jacob D. Babcock House displays a remarkable degree of integrity, having been altered little since its initial construction and subsequent expansion in the mid-19th century. The exterior, which is clad in wood clapboards with simple corner boards, displays little ornamentation except for some decorative moulding at the main entrance. The five-room plan of the main block is intact on both the first and second floors. On both floors, each of the three principal rooms has a fireplace. The fireplace in the original kitchen retains its bake oven. Interior finishes include cased corner posts, plaster walls and ceilings, simple wood wainscoting, moulded chair rails and paneled doors. Wide-plank flooring survives on the second floor; on the first floor, the original floors have been overlaid with narrow oak floorboards.

Originally built by Edward Wells, the residence was the home of Jacob D. Babcock (1789-1867) from around 1828 until his death nearly 40 years later. Babcock was a co-owner of the Ashaway Woolen Mill, operated a grist mill in the area and, in later years, acquired the nearby Bethel Woolen Mill. A Seventh Day Baptist, Babcock was deeply involved in the temperance and abolition movements. Babcock's home reportedly served as a stop on the Underground Railroad, a claim that is supported by an 1876 history of Hopkinton and by first-hand accounts from a neighbor.

During discussion, Dr. Malone expressed interest in knowing more about Jacob Babcock's involvement in the textile industry and noted that there were several noteworthy early mills located in the Ashaway area. Mr. Schoettle suggested that there might be a potential historic District in Ashaway but also felt the Babcock house appeared to be individually eligible for the National Register. On a motion by Dr. Malone, seconded by Mr. Abbott, the Commission unanimously

VOTED preliminary approval for the property.

7. Other Business: There was no other business.
8. Next regular meeting date: Wednesday July 8, 2015 at 9:30 AM.
9. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:40 AM.

Minutes recorded by,



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



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MEMORANDUM

To: RIHPHC Commissioners

From: Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

Re: 2015 State Preservation Grants Amended Regulations
Response to Public Comments

Date: June 29, 2015

Updated regulations for the State Preservation Grants Program were posted for public comment on May 12, 2015. The 2015 regulations closely follow the earlier 2003 and 2005 SPG regulations. Commissioners were briefed on the proposed SPG regulation amendments at Commission meetings on January 14 and again on June 10. Public information workshops were held on April 25 and June 3. A public hearing was held on June 12.

Two written public comments were received regarding the Regulations' definition of "Public Historic Site." The Executive Director of the Providence Preservation Society (PPS) stated concern in a letter dated May 29, 2015 that "the intent of the rules is that only historic sites which are also museums and sites conventionally considered performance venues will be considered for these grants." The executive Director of Preserve Rhode Island (PRI) stated in a letter dated June 9, 2015 that "the standard of being open to the public 12 days a year for Public Historic Sites narrows the scope beyond the legislative intent for this new program." The PRI letter also offers the policy recommendation that "If RIHPHC is able to help with capital repairs for a broader range of historic properties than those in museum use, the quality of place of Rhode Island will be better served." Copies of the PPS and PRI letters are attached.

What is the proposed definition of "Public Historic Site?"

As stated in the posted draft regulations:

“PUBLIC HISTORIC SITE - A historic structure open to the general public that is used principally for events and activities of broad community interest and that is widely recognized as being representative of the community’s heritage. At a minimum, the public historic site must be open to the public twelve (12) days per year.”

The definition of Museum or Cultural Arts Center is”

“MUSEUM OR CULTURAL ARTS CENTER - A historic structure open to the public that is used principally to house artifacts and exhibits of historical, artistic, cultural, or educational value; or a historic structure open to the public that is used principally to present cultural events such as performances of music, dance, or theater. At a minimum, the museum or cultural arts center must be open to the public twelve (12) days per year.”

Under the proposed regulations, historic properties that are used as a Public Historic Site or that are used as a Museum or Cultural Arts Center, are eligible to apply for a State Preservation Grant. In order to be eligible, a property must meet one of these definitions; eligible properties do not need to meet both definitions. Therefore, the proposed definitions already include a broader range of historic properties than only those in museum use, as suggested by PRI.

What is the history of these definitions?

These definitions were established in the State Preservation Grants programs enacted by the General Assembly in 2002 and 2004. From 2002-2004 to 2015, the “State Preservation Grants Program” has consistently referred to historic buildings open to the public as Museums, Cultural Art Centers, or Public Historic Sites.

In 2002, the General Assembly approved Budget Article 6 to authorize \$3,000,000 for the “Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission to fund capital preservation for renovation projects for museums and cultural art centers located in historic structures in the State of Rhode Island.” The 2002 definition of Museums and Cultural Art Centers is unchanged in 2015.

In April of 2003, RIHPHC’s executive director wrote to the bond’s primary legislative sponsor, House Finance Committee Vice Chair Paul Crowley, to explain the draft regulations and definitions: “The definitions generally exclude churches and libraries. The definition of museums and cultural art centers includes the requirement that the structure be used “principally” as a museum or cultural art center.” Representative Crowley agreed that the definition followed legislative intent. The policy that historic properties that receive grants should be open to the public at least twelve days per year is a long-standing National Park Service requirement for federal historic preservation grants, and RIHPHC incorporated it into the State Preservation Grant Program in 2003.

A second State Preservation Grants Bond Issue in 2004 added the new category of “Public Historic Site” along with “Museums and Cultural Art Centers.” As described in 2005, this change was required by the 2004 Bond Issue language that added the term “Public Historic Site” as eligible for grants along with “Museums and Cultural Art Centers.” The intent of the addition was to allow historic buildings actively used for public events to be eligible for grants even if the building was not a museum or cultural art center. When evaluating a grant application for a "Public Historic Site" the quality and frequency of the public events held at the site was important and also the extent to which the site is "representative of the community's heritage." A historic town hall is one example; another example could be a historic library building where public events are frequently hosted. However, a historic building used by a private organization for events for its own members might not fully meet the definition of "Public Historic Site."

Between 2002 and 2007, the State Preservation Grants Program funded restoration projects at 82 historic buildings statewide used as Museums, Cultural Art Centers, and Public Historic Sites open to the public.

Preservationists tried to get new State funding to continue the SPG grants program in 2008 and 2012, but they were not successful.

In 2014, Governor Chafee proposed and the General Assembly adopted Budget Article 5, the Creative and Cultural Economy capital development program:

“Approval of this question will authorize the State of Rhode Island to issue general obligation bonds, refunding bonds, and temporary notes in an amount not to exceed thirty-five million dollars (\$35,000,000) to fund capital improvement, preservation and renovation projects for public and nonprofit artistic, performance centers, historic sites, museums and cultural art centers located throughout the State of Rhode Island, to be allotted as follows:

“State Preservation Grants Program \$5,000,000”

“Provide funds to cities, towns and non-profit organizations to preserve, renovate and improve public and nonprofit historic sites, museums, and cultural art centers located in historic structures in the State of Rhode Island to be administered by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission.”

The 2014 language is almost identical to the 2002-2004 State Preservation Grant Program, and seems to call for a continuation of the existing SPG program.

In 2015, RIHPHC staff drafted amendments to the 2005 SPG regulations to update the program to reflect the 2014 Bond Issue. Most changes are technical in nature, and the basic program framework remains the same. The definitions of eligible properties as Museums, Cultural Arts Centers, and Public Historic Sites located in a historic structure that is open to the public at least twelve days per year is the same as in 2005.

Should the definition of “Public Historic Site” be changed?

Preserve Rhode Island and the Providence Preservation Society feel that the definition should be changed as follows

“PUBLIC HISTORIC SITE” - A historic structure owned by a governmental entity or a public charity and that is widely recognized as being representative of the community’s heritage.”

PPS and PRI would not require the Public Historic Site to be open to the public. They argue that preservation of a significant historic site is a valuable public purpose. They also note that there is no explicit 2014 statement of Legislative intent that the terms and definitions of the previous State Preservation Grants should be continued. They also note that in the 2014 Bond Issue language: “public and nonprofit historic sites, museums, and cultural art centers” could be interpreted to mean public ownership rather than public use or access.

RIHPHC staff think it is likely that Governor Chafee and the General Assembly intended to provide new Bond funding to the proven, existing State Preservation Grants program of 2002-2007. The 2014 Creative and Cultural Economy capital development program as a whole was presented as an economic development measure that would expand and improve arts and cultural facilities open to the public. This in turn was intended to stimulate economic activity related to attracting and serving audiences for creative and cultural events and heritage tourism, and construction of the capital improvements would also create jobs. The State Preservation Grants Program fits this public agenda.

As policy, I cannot recommend to RIHPHC Commissioners that “public and nonprofit historic sites, museums, and cultural art centers” that are closed to the public should be eligible for State Preservation Grants. The PRI-PPS definition of “public historic site” virtually eliminates the need for the categories of “museums and cultural arts centers” because almost any historic building owned by a nonprofit organization, town government, or State of Rhode Island would meet the PRI-PPS definition. For example, nonprofit, town, or State offices in historic buildings, residences in nonprofit owned historic buildings, and nonprofit, town, or State owned historic buildings that are physically unfit for public entry all could meet the PRI-PPS definition. As an eligibility threshold, I recommend that the historic property should be open to the public on some basis.

The minimum threshold for defining public access as being open to the public at least twelve days per year is based on a long-standing National Park Service requirement for federal historic preservation grants. In some cases, there may be good reasons why the twelve days per year requirement should be modified by an accommodation, such as visitation by appointment or event-based opportunities for the public to visit the site.

The extent and quality of a site’s public access and public use should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis as part of the Application review. Project Impact is one of the evaluation criteria included in the SPG regulations. The ability of the project to have a beneficial public impact may include the degree of public use, such as lectures, tours, public forums, educational exhibits, etc. to which the general public is invited and frequently attends.

Conclusion: The proposed definition of Public Historic Site is consistent with past SPG Program practice, but it is seriously questioned by two leading historic preservation organizations.

Alternative #1, the Commission may choose to keep the definition of Public Historic Site as:

“PUBLIC HISTORIC SITE - A historic structure open to the general public that is used principally for events and activities of broad community interest and that is widely recognized as being representative of the community’s heritage. At a minimum, the public historic site must be open to the public twelve (12) days per year.”

Alternative #2, the Commission may choose to revise the definition as follows:

“Public Historic Site - A historic structure open to the general public that is widely recognized as being representative of the community’s heritage. A public historic site must be open to the public twelve (12) days per year, unless alternative arrangements are provided for public access.”

Alternative #2 removes the phrase “used principally for events and activities of broad community interest” and it expands public access to include “alternative arrangements are provided for public access.”

Alternative #3, the Commission may choose to adopt the PRI-PPS definition:

“Public Historic Site” - A historic structure owned by a governmental entity or a nonprofit organization and that is widely recognized as being representative of the community’s heritage.”

Alternative #3 removes any requirements for use or public access.

EVALUATION of APPLICATIONS for 2015 STATE PRESERVATION GRANTS
Adopted by the RIHP&HC July 8, 2015

The following criteria are used to evaluate projects. Overall scores may be used to rank and sort applications in order to facilitate discussion among reviewers. Excellent projects will score well in every category. However, a very low score in significance, need, or impact may indicate a project that should not be awarded a grant. The Review Committee's final recommendations to the Commission for grant funding will be based on a statewide group of projects taking into account all of the evaluation criteria.

(1) HISTORICAL/ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (10 points): 1-10 points will rate the property's historical and architectural significance.

Excellent projects will further the preservation of significant historic properties. This evaluation factor tries to measure the relative historical and architectural significance of applicants' properties.

- 1-3 points: properties that contribute to the overall significance of a historic district but lack individual significance.
- 4-6 points: properties within a historic district or individually registered that are very good examples of their type and/or important local landmarks.
- 7-10 points: properties that possess individual distinction and are considered significant when compared with other historic properties throughout the state.

(2) PROJECT NEED (10 points): 1-10 points will rate the project's physical preservation needs.

Excellent projects will undertake restoration and construction work that truly is needed to preserve the historic property and to fulfill its mission as a museum or cultural art center or public historic site. This evaluation factor tries to measure the value of the proposed project work.

- 1-3 points: projects that do not address important historic features and that have little impact on the operation of the public historic site, museum, or cultural art center.
- 4-6 points: projects that make a long-term improvement and preserve character-defining features of the building and/or make a needed improvement to the building's function as a public historic site, museum, or cultural art center.
- 7-10 points: projects that address a significant threat to the building's preservation and/or restore unusually significant historic features.

(3) **PROJECT IMPACT (10 points):** 1-10 points will rate the project's ability to serve an audience and to attract support.

Excellent projects will serve the larger community in addition to meeting a need of the historic property. This evaluation factor tries to measure the extent to which the completed project will benefit people who live in the community and recognizes public use of the public historic site, museum, or cultural art center. This factor also measures the ability of a State Preservation Grant to leverage other support for the project.

- 1-3 points: the project will serve relatively few people and will not materially enhance preservation of the property, public activities, or cultural programming.
- 4-6 points: the project will serve many people in its community; it will be visible; and it demonstrates local support.
- 7-10 points: the project will serve many people in its community and throughout its region or statewide; it will be highly visible; and it has generated widespread support in its own community and beyond.

(4) **GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION (5 points):** 1-5 points will rate the project's ability to address the needs of significantly underserved populations and/or recognize the project as the most important State Preservation Grant application in its town or region.

This evaluation criterion is used to identify those particular applications that will receive special consideration in order to assure that State Preservation Grants are awarded to projects throughout the state and/or projects that have a unique ability to serve underserved populations.

(5) **PLANNING (5 points):** 1-5 points will rate the project's compatibility with a local comprehensive plan or development plan.

Some projects are developed specifically with the purpose of furthering a community development plan, such as restoration of a historic theatre that is part of a larger plan to revitalize the economy of a downtown Main Street or improvement of a historic farm museum to be the centerpiece of a community-wide greenway and open space program. "Planning Points" should be awarded to such projects. However, points should not be awarded just because a project will be "good for the community" in some non-specific way since it is expected that every project will be good for its community.