

RHODE ISLAND STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

1995

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Providence Preservation Society; Market House: RISD Communica-
tions; Southeast Lighthouse: RIHP&HC; Winsor Blacksmith Shop:
Foster Preservation Society; John Hunt House: East Providence
Historical Society; 576 Broad Street: Providence Preservation Society
Revolving Fund; "This Is Our City": Preservation Society of
Pawtucket.*



**RHODE ISLAND
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION
& HERITAGE
COMMISSION**

Introduction

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission's annual State Historic Preservation Awards honor individuals, organizations, and projects for their contributions to the preservation of Rhode Island's historic resources.

The Commission has named two awards in tribute to individuals who exemplify Rhode Islanders' commitment to historic preservation. They are the highest honors which the Commission bestows.

Antoinette F. Downing, in the twenty-seven years she has served in the volunteer position of Commission Chairman, has contributed her time, her knowledge, and, most importantly, her vision to shape Rhode Island's state historic preservation program. At the same time, she has generously lent her counsel and support to numerous organizations and projects throughout the state. In her honor, the Commission created the Antoinette F. Downing Award for Volunteer Service to Preservation.

Frederick C. Williamson was appointed State Historic Preservation Officer in 1969. Today, he is the dean of SHPOs, having served longer than any other in the nation. His professional expertise in government relations and his skill in promoting effective state and local government partnerships are invaluable in advancing historic preservation in Rhode Island. In his honor, the Commission established the Frederick C. Williamson Award for Professional Leadership in Preservation.

We salute all the recipients of the 1995 Rhode Island State Historic Preservation Awards.

Antoinette F. Downing Volunteer Service Award



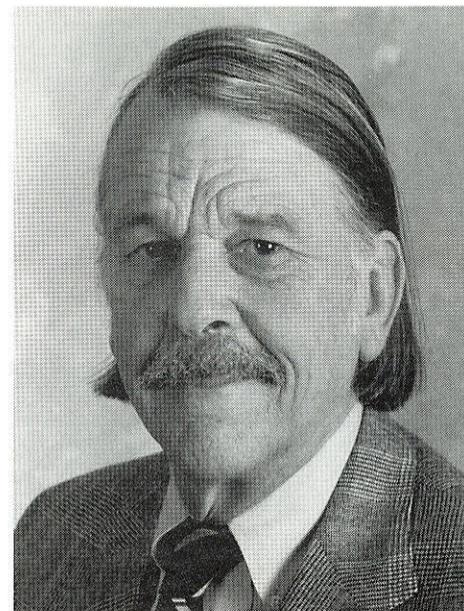
Isaac G. Smith, Jr.

The effective preservation of a community's sense of time and place depends on collaboration among numerous local organizations and institutions. There are many ways of establishing cooperative networks within a community. Few towns, however, are as fortunate as Westerly, where preservation efforts are linked by the multifaceted volunteer involvement of Ike Smith.

Ike's long-standing personal association with varied aspects of Westerly life evolved into a strong sense of historic stewardship. His background connects him directly to the Babcock-Smith House, one of the town's oldest historic properties, and to the Smith Granite Company, the town's principal nineteenth- and early- twentieth-century industry. Ike became the driving force behind the preservation of the house, and generously shares his knowledge about the granite industry through lectures and referrals. An active member of the Westerly Historical Society, he helped to develop a bus tour to familiarize local school children with their heritage. The Memorial and Library Association of Westerly and Central Baptist Church also benefit from Ike's knowledge, expertise and volunteer efforts.

Isaac Smith's personal commitment to preserving the community's physical heritage and instilling a sense of history in future generations and his ability to work with a variety of local organizations ensure that Westerly's past will remain an important part of its future.

Frederick C. Williamson Professional Leadership Award



William D. Warner, F.A.I.A.

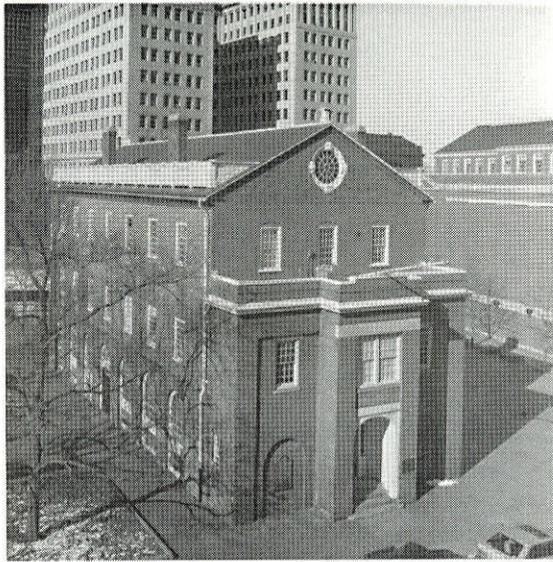
"What type of city is Providence to be?" asked the Providence Journal in April, 1970. One possibility, the Journal suggested, was the "vibrant new community" envisioned by architect and planner William Warner. Today, Bill Warner's vision is becoming a reality.

Bill first began to shape the future of Providence in the 1950s as Project Architect for the College Hill Demonstration Study. This ground-breaking urban renewal project -- the first in the country to address the preservation of an historic neighborhood -- was only the starting point. In the 1960s, his plan to revitalize Randall Square, renamed Moshassuck Square, called for the reuse of abandoned mill buildings, supplemented with new construction, to provide mixed residential, office, and retail uses. Fire destroyed the mills before the project began, but Bill's design for Moshassuck Square Apartments was realized.

It is the Providence waterfront, however, that most people associate with Bill Warner today. He lobbied for relocating the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers and removing street decking over the Providence River. His Waterplace, river walks and bridges are exemplary urban design. His plan for the Old Harbor suggests future possibilities.

The scope of Bill Warner's achievement is apparent to anyone who walks through College Hill or strolls along the water. By incorporating once-neglected elements of the historic city in a grand new design, he has earned Providence national recognition for preservation and design.

Historic Preservation Award



Rhode Island School of Design

Long a national leader in design education, RISD has become a leader in the preservation of historic buildings for academic purposes. RISD's urban campus, in the heart of the College Hill National Historic Landmark District, occupies both modern and rehabilitated historic buildings for academic activities.

Ever since its 1892 establishment on College Hill, in the midst of Providence's thriving artistic community, RISD has recycled old buildings. The 1950 acquisition and refurbishing of the long-abandoned Market House (1773), however, was the school's first significant stewardship project. In the mid-1960s the school's plan to demolish Woods-Gerry House (1860-63) precipitated local opposition. A subsequent change in school policy led to key rehabilitation projects, the 1970s adaptation of the Phillips Lead Warehouse (1844) as a center for the study of architecture, landscape architecture, and interior design, and the 1990s rehabilitation of the What Cheer Garage (1910, ca 1923) for the Freshman Foundation Program and painting studios. Recent renovation of several nineteenth-century dwellings along Angell and Congdon Streets as "Outer Houses" provides uncommon dormitory experiences within the larger East Side community.

RISD's purposeful stewardship reinforces its philosophy that good preservation engenders good design.

Historic Preservation Award



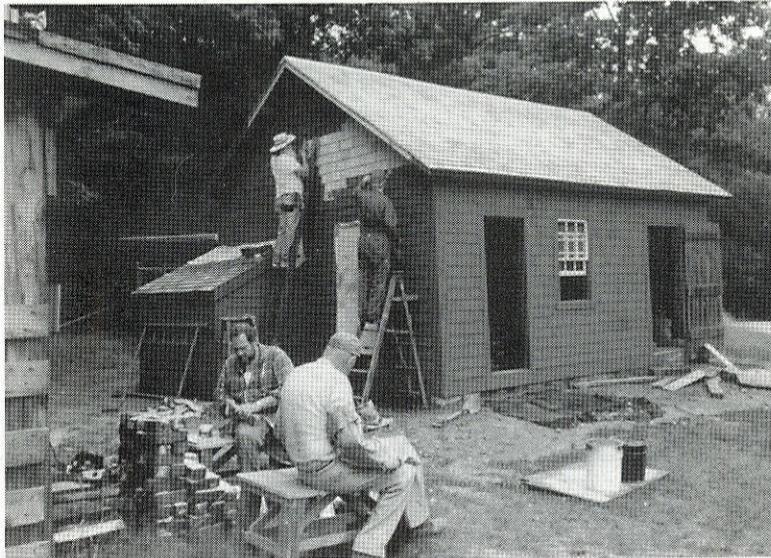
Southeast Lighthouse, Block Island

After serving 120 years as a warning beacon, the Southeast Lighthouse atop Block Island's majestic Mohegan Bluffs was itself in danger. Wind and surf had eroded a once-sweeping lawn and brought the edge of the steep cliff dangerously close to the lighthouse. Many thought its rescue impossible.

The Block Island Southeast Lighthouse Foundation rose to meet the challenge. The rescue demanded herculean efforts of planning, coordination, negotiation, fund raising, and technology. It also required the cooperation of many agencies, individuals, and organizations, including the Rhode Island Congressional delegation, the United States Army Corps of Engineers, the United States Coast Guard, and the Department of Environmental Management. The major credit, however, belongs to the dedicated members of the Block Island Southeast Lighthouse Foundation, who refused to give up the fight to rescue this National Historic Landmark.

After a decade of planning, the moving and resettling of the lighthouse by International Chimney Corporation and Expert House Movers was executed so flawlessly that the task appeared simple. The stunning success of this undertaking should inspire us all to believe that no worthwhile project is impossible.

Historic Preservation Award



Winsor Blacksmith Shop

Turning the threat of losing an important component of the community's agrarian past into an opportunity for fellowship and education, the Foster Preservation Society met the challenge to save and to interpret the Ira Winsor Blacksmith Shop (ca 1870).

In the fall of 1993, new owners donated the shop, still on its original Winsor Road site, to the Society with the provision that it be moved within the town and restored. The restoration process which followed recalls the cooperative efforts long common among members of the farming community. Gathering a capable, enthusiastic corps of volunteers, the Society carefully disassembled the shop. The following spring, the volunteers reconstructed the building near the Town House on the Foster town grounds at Foster Center.

The shop retains both its bellows and a sling for oxen, which were used until well into the late nineteenth century to pull farm equipment in rural Foster. Unlike horses, oxen cannot stand on three legs and must be supported during shoeing. As restored, the building now serves to educate young Foster citizens about an increasingly remote past as well as to reinforce the town's agricultural heritage.

Historic Preservation Award



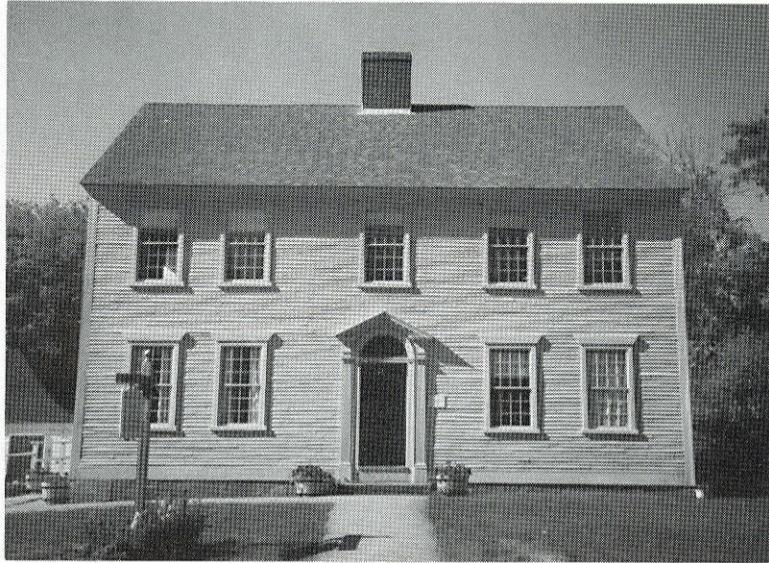
Robert E. Smith House
576 Broad Street
William Halton House
39-41 Harvard Avenue

Omni Development Corporation and Providence Preservation Society Revolving Fund, Inc., transformed two substantial nineteenth-century houses from advanced decay to high-quality affordable housing for nine low-income families and continued the revitalization of a once abandoned section of Upper South Providence.

Though dilapidated, vandalized, and fire-scarred, the houses were surprisingly sound, with a great deal of original material. The overall condition of the area, however, hindered traditional inner-city neighborhood redevelopment. Realizing the buildings' potential demanded careful planning, coordination, and negotiation by the developers. With a pre-development loan from the Local Initiative Support Corporation, the two non-profit developers were able to put together financing from the Providence Plan Housing Corporation, the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission. Further financial support came from the use of both low-income-housing and historic-rehabilitation tax credits provided by the Rhode Island Equity Fund.

The two neighboring houses, renovated by Segal Construction with construction management by the PPS Revolving Fund, are now local landmarks, and provide spacious, richly detailed, and affordable apartments for families. Their rehabilitation brilliantly demonstrates that historic preservation, affordable housing, and neighborhood revitalization can all come out winners.

Historic Preservation Award



John Hunt House

Since 1987, the members of the East Providence Historical Society have dedicated themselves, individually and collectively, to rescuing the John Hunt House.

The Hunt House, built around 1790 by a well-to-do miller and landowner, is a handsome example of Federal architecture. Owned by the City of East Providence and used for fifty years as municipal office space, it had fallen into disrepair by 1979. The City boarded up the building, and for several years it stood vacant, prone to decay and a ready target for vandals.

What the City of East Providence dismissed as surplus, the East Providence Historical Society recognized as treasure. In 1987, the group, which had been seeking a site for a local history museum, obtained a 25-year lease on the building. Over the next seven years, the Society undertook a painstaking restoration project characterized by careful research and planning, meticulous respect for original materials and detailing, an extraordinary commitment of volunteer labor, and a healthy dose of New England thrift. Today, the restoration of the building's main rooms is complete -- ahead of schedule and under budget.

The Society's restoration project has not only preserved an important community landmark, but has stimulated local interest in preservation. And the Society's energetic volunteers have already begun to use the building for local history programming for children and adults.

Historic Preservation Award



Preservation Society of Pawtucket
Children's Education Program

Engaging schoolchildren's interest in their community's history requires ingenuity, creativity, and sound teaching methods. An outstanding model for heritage educators, the Preservation Society of Pawtucket's "This Is Our City" includes a videotape, bibliography, lesson plans, teaching materials and a walking tour for children in grades K through 6.

Young children are introduced to concepts of "home," "neighborhood," and "community" using stories, drawing, and basic language arts. Materials arrive in a colorful, house-shaped box, painted to resemble a Victorian home and furnished with a blanket-size map of Pawtucket. The map is made to be placed on the floor so that students can explore their city and its neighborhoods and place models of key historic landmarks, such as Slater Mill, in their correct locations. Older students view a video about Pawtucket's heritage and undertake social studies projects which establish links between U.S. history, usually taught in fourth grade, and Pawtucket's history.

PSP collaborated with the School Department and the Children's Museum of Pawtucket on "This is our City," which was partially funded by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission. Two talented volunteers assisted in its creation: teacher Cheryl Williamson developed the curriculum, while Denise Panichas mobilized the necessary volunteer and financial support.