

RHODE ISLAND
STATE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
AWARDS

1998

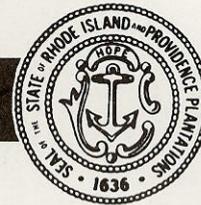
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Robert Merriam, from The New England Wireless and Steam Museum
Kingston Station, by Clifford M. Renshaw

Rhode Island State House Rotunda, *Providence Journal-Bulletin*

Photo by Sandor Bodo

Redwood Library and Athenaeum, by Thomas Palmer



RHODE ISLAND
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION
& HERITAGE
COMMISSION

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Introduction

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

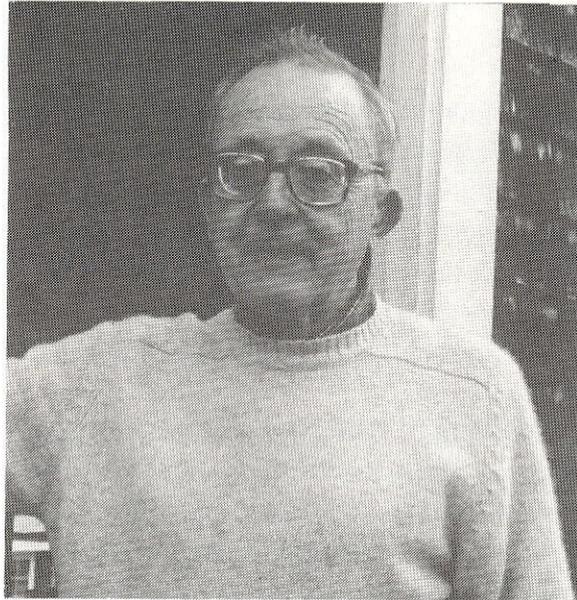
The Commission has named two awards in tribute to individuals who exemplify Rhode Islanders' commitment to historic preservation. They are the highest honors which the Commission bestows.

Antoinette F. Downing served in the volunteer position of Commission Chairman for twenty-seven years, from 1968 to 1995, and continues to advise the Commission today as Chair Emerita. She 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. When Mrs. Downing retired as Chairman of the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission in 1995, the Commission members elected Mr. Williamson as the new Chairman. In his honor, the Commission established the Frederick C. Williamson Award for Professional Leadership in Preservation.

We salute all the recipients of the 1998 State Historic Preservation Awards.

Antoinette F. Downing Volunteer Service Award



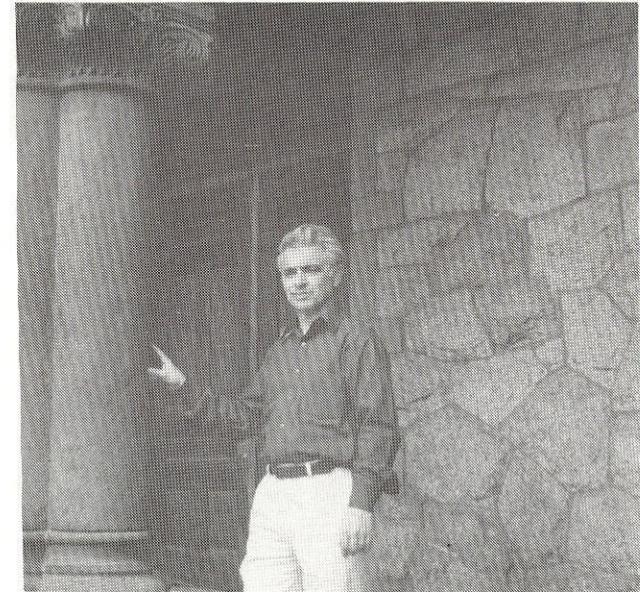
Robert Merriam

Founder and driving force of the New England Wireless and Steam Museum, Bob Merriam has devoted thirty-five years toward preserving important components of the state's technological history through an institution important far beyond the state of Rhode Island.

Bob's lifelong interest in electronics and technology began as a boy, building radios. An education in engineering at Harvard University and a distinguished career in marine electronics led toward establishing the museum in 1964 to preserve and exhibit the marvels of engineering, especially in radio and steam power. First housed in an old cow barn, the museum complex now comprises half a dozen structures.

Supported and staffed solely by volunteers, the Wireless and Steam Museum has rescued and preserved two historic Rhode Island buildings and countless industrial and engineering artifacts. Chief among its collection are the world's oldest equipped wireless station and only functional George H. Corliss steam engine, manufactured in Providence and rescued from a factory in Maine. These objects exist here not in isolation but in the broader context of industrial development. Through its interpretive programs, the museum arouses curiosity and interest in the achievements of the past toward stimulating imagination for the future.

Frederick C. Williamson Professional Leadership Award



Lombard John Pozzi

For thirty years, Lombard Pozzi's architectural career has demonstrated extraordinary range in both the preservation of Rhode Island's historic resources and the maintenance of its sense of place. From strict restoration of key landmarks to new designs in historically sensitive areas, Lombard draws on extensive professional expertise and keen aesthetic sensibilities to provide appropriate architectural responses for every design challenge.

Lombard's ability to organize complex, long-term restoration projects and his acute attention to detail have well served a number of Rhode Island monuments, including East Providence's Squantum Association Clubhouse, Johnston's Dame Farm, North Providence's Old Town Hall, Pawtucket's Slater Mill, Providence's First Baptist Meeting House and Roger Williams Park, Warren's George Haile Free Library, Wickford's St Paul's Church, and his native Bristol's Benjamin Church Home, Burnside Memorial Hall, Linden Place, and Rogers Free Library.

Integrating new construction into historic areas, one of architecture's trickiest dilemmas, suggests parameters--not problems--to Lombard, who draws on his encyclopedic knowledge of historic architecture to engage the present with the past. His exemplary Peaberry Block (1987-88) in Bristol sets a high standard worthy of emulation.

Both his profession and the State of Rhode Island benefit from the talent, commitment, and contributions of architect Lombard Pozzi.

Historic Preservation Award



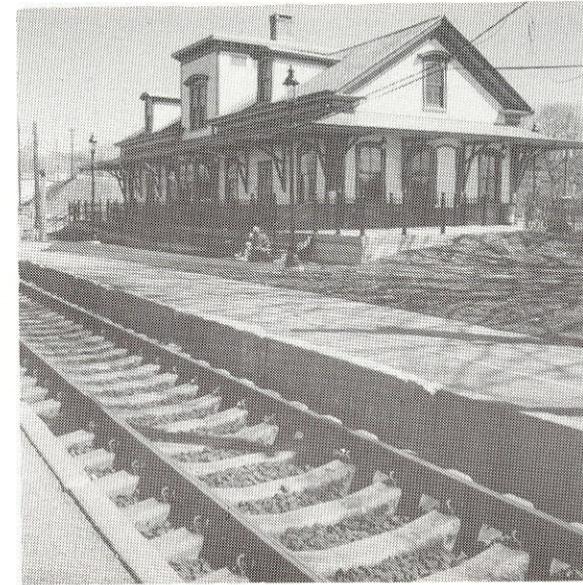
Providence Art Club

Steward of four buildings that form one of the nation's most impressive urban streetscapes, The Providence Art Club has long demonstrated exemplary dedication to their preservation.

The Art Club Row includes the Deacon Taylor and Seril Dodge House I, built in 1786; Seril Dodge House II, 1791; and Sydney Burleigh's Fleur-de-Lys Studios, 1886, a National Historic Landmark. Historically they serve as touchstones to Providence's China Trade era, the origins of its jewelry-manufacturing industry, and the nineteenth-century emergence of a lively artistic community. Architecturally they recall Providence's important Federal era and represent the first flowering of American Arts & Crafts architecture. Urbanistically they create a dramatic cascade down steep Thomas Street, visible as they are across the block-square open space around the First Baptist Meeting House. Few streetscapes anywhere are so impressively constituted.

Since the late 1970s the Art Club has actively committed its resources to the stewardship of its property. Major structural and systems overhauling of the 1791 Dodge House, renovation and gradual restoration of the 1786 Dodge House, and conservation of the Fleur-de-Lys facade are nearing completion, even as the club undertakes new projects and continues well-planned cyclical maintenance. Their continuing efforts ensure the survival of the row for future generations.

Historic Preservation Award



Kingston Railroad Station

The only original depot still in use on the old New York-to-Boston line, the 1875 Kingston Railroad Station was almost destroyed by fire in December 1988. Its preservation was in serious doubt.

Enter in 1991 the triumvirate that saved the station: The Friends of Kingston Station, Rhode Island Department of Transportation, and Senator John H. Chafee. The Friends negotiated with RIDOT to assume sponsorship of the restoration as a part of the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project. Senator Chafee secured federal funds for a "Demonstration Project for Historic Renovation and Development of an Intermodal Center at Kingston Railroad Station." RIDOT purchased the station and oversaw its development. As just completed, the station will serve as a connection between the improved rail service and local surface transportation.

Kingston Station's restored appearance belies its extensive restoration. First, to accommodate new high-speed trains the building was moved sixteen feet to the east and raised three and a half feet. The north waiting room, almost entirely destroyed by the fire, was rebuilt, and the interior was refurbished. The exterior's flaring peripheral canopy supported on massive brackets, substantially removed or altered, was rebuilt in original form. Finally, the building was repainted in New York, New Haven and Hartford colors. The station's thorough, thoughtful restoration admirably befits its unique status on the Northeast Corridor.

Historic Preservation Award



Ledge Point Cottage

Built in 1891 as the gate lodge for “Rockhurst,” Ledge Point Cottage provided a fanciful introduction to the Loire Valley-inspired summer cottage designed by Peabody & Stearns for Mrs H. Mortimer Brooks. The main house was demolished after the property was acquired for development in the mid-1940s. By the early 1990s the rather forlorn looking gate lodge was abandoned and seriously deteriorated.

After Doriene West Farzan inherited the property, she chose to restore the two surviving buildings on the estate, beginning in 1990-1992 with the coachman’s house on Ledge Road. At the gate lodge, the exterior and structural elements were in an advanced state of deterioration; moisture penetration and invading squirrels had destroyed the interior. Extensive structural, cosmetic, and systems repairs were needed to make the place habitable.

Ledge Point Cottage was restored as a single-family house with an uncommon attention to detail. Beautifully handcrafted details have been meticulously restored or artfully recreated--much of the work by the owner herself. This restoration, so lovingly done, far exceeds any standards for rehabilitation and sets a high threshold for preserving historic character while accommodating modern living.

Historic Preservation Award



Globe Village

“What is the future of Lincoln Street?” When this question was posed just two years ago, this Woonsocket street lined with abandoned mid-nineteenth-century mill tenements was the picture of urban blight. Today it illustrates highly successful urban redevelopment, as new residents move into recently rehabilitated spaces.

Industrial activity began on the west side of the Woonsocket Falls in 1827, when the first Globe Mill was constructed. After George Ballou acquired the mill in 1864 he began modernization and expansion of the mill and village. In 1865 he built four wood-frame tenements on a new street named in memory of President Lincoln. After adding a new mill in 1873, he constructed seven more tenements. While the mills and one of the tenements have since disappeared, the remaining group conveys a strong sense of a nineteenth-century urban mill village.

In the spring of 1996, the Woonsocket Neighborhood Development Corporation held a design forum to stimulate and give direction to the street’s redevelopment. Developers Denise and Robert Jensen stepped forward in late 1996 with a proposal to rehabilitate these last survivors of the Globe Village as two-family owner-occupied housing. Just as the rehabilitation paid attention both to individual building details and to the overall streetscape, the project also revitalizes both this neighborhood and the city as a whole.

Historic Preservation Award



Valley Falls Heritage Park

Located at a significant drop on the fast-flowing Blackstone River, Valley Falls is a choice mill site on the river that became the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution. The site enjoyed increasingly dense industrial development after the second decade of the nineteenth century when a complex of textile mills lined both sides of the river to take advantage of the tremendous water power. To tame the river for power, mill owners built a network of dams and raceways on both sides of the river. The Valley Falls Mills flourished into the twentieth century, but the fatal decline of the New England textile industry after World War I took its toll here: by 1929 the mill on the Cumberland side had few tenants, and the whole complex was razed in 1934. The site remained underused and overgrown for half a century.

When the Town of Cumberland decided to turn the two-and-a-half-acre parcel into a park, the Historic District Commission suggested incorporating the archaeological remnants as an organizing theme for its recreational development. Professional archaeologists and historians analyzed the site and collaborated closely with park designers to incorporate interpretive material.

The completed park exceeds expectations. The community has reclaimed public use of a beautiful parcel of riverfront land, whose historical context will now be comprehensible for generations to come.

Historic Preservation Award



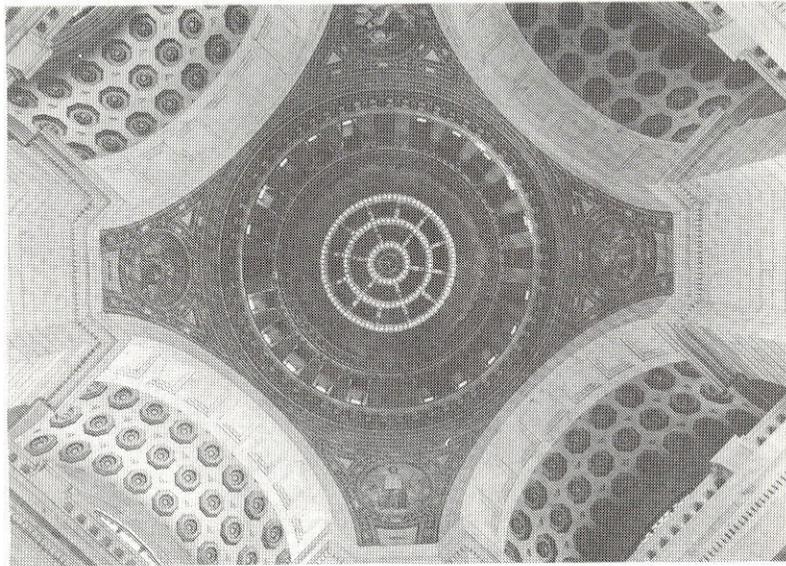
Historic Preservation Program and Center for Historic Preservation Roger Williams University

What began in the mid-1970s as a college major has developed into a whole department with significant outreach beyond the campus. Roger Williams University's Preservation Program and Center for Historic Preservation significantly benefit preservation activities across and beyond Rhode Island.

The school's "hands-on" approach to historic preservation benefits both student and community. Historic preservation student interns have learned immediately from a variety of architectural conservation and preservation planning organizations throughout the state while contributing significantly to those organizations' achieving their own goals as well as undertaking projects otherwise unimaginable. The Center for Historic Preservation also serves as a marvelous information resource available to those outside the university community. Graduates of the program occupy prominent positions within the Rhode Island preservation community as administrators, architects, artisans, curators, educators, historic-district commissioners, and volunteers.

The school's integration of scholarly activity, local historic resources employed as documentary and physical learning tools, and involvement in community activities greatly benefits all those it engages.

Historic Preservation Award



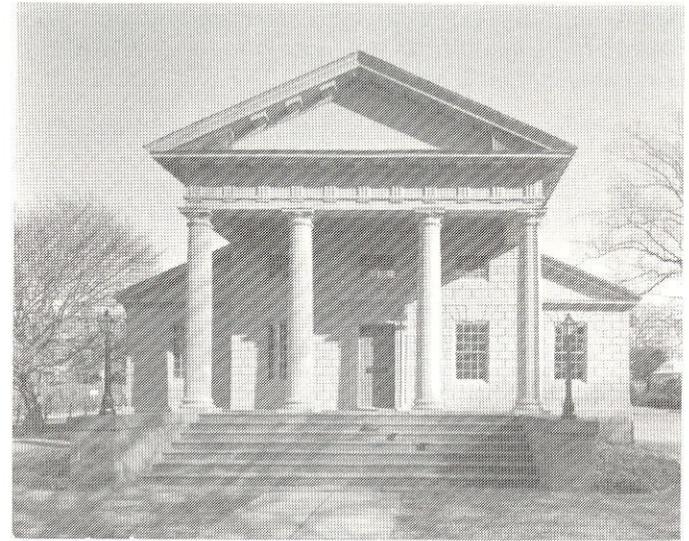
Rhode Island State House Rotunda

At the very heart of the State House the restored Rotunda exemplifies both the magnificence of its architecture and the commitment of the State to its preservation. The Rotunda's stunning spatial organization and ornamentation constitute the building's architectural linchpin. Its restoration, itself intrinsically worthy, reflects larger, enduring issues.

Designed by the pre-eminent firm McKim, Mead & White and completed nearly a century ago, the State House is a key monument of American Renaissance architecture. Its gleaming white presence projected a vigorous new image that captured the national imagination and inspired a whole generation of governmental and institutional buildings. Remarkably, the building's form and setting remained visibly intact.

Because it was virtually unaltered, the building suffered from the illusion that it needed no restoration. Many individuals and groups worked to dispel that misconception, but members of the legislature and administration actually seized the initiative to do the work. Restoration of the Senate Chamber and Lounge, State Reception Room, and Library; replacement of a dangerously antiquated electrical system; and extensive exterior marble and window repairs have already been realized, while repairs to the building's terraces continue. In the midst of it all, however, the restored Rotunda abides as a symbol of respect for this extraordinary building and for Rhode Island citizens, the building's true owners.

Historic Preservation Award



The Redwood Library and Athenaeum

The exacting restoration of this National Historic Landmark's historic exterior appropriately signals the beginning of the library's two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary celebration--a celebration calculated to meet the challenge of the institution's physical and programmatic needs for generations to come.

Begun in 1747 in a far distant colony of the British empire, Newport's Redwood Library nevertheless set a new cultural standard. Peter Harrison's design embodied up-to-the-minute English classicism heretofore unseen on these shores. Its collection was, unlike those of other colonial libraries, selected and purchased by local literati--not built from members' cast offs. Though much expanded, both original building and collection remain largely intact.

The Redwood's restoration demonstrates the highest preservation standards and practice. The historic building fabric was substantially retained and preserved with minimal introduction of new materials. Techniques struck a fine balance between traditional artisanry and state-of-the-art technology. Documentation of the project makes clear the distinction between current and past work.

As part of a larger project that includes eventual expansion of the library, the Redwood's restoration also demonstrates sensible stewardship by giving first priority to the stabilization of the historic resource before moving forward.

Past Award Recipients

Antoinette F. Downing Volunteer Service Award

Awarded to an individual volunteer preservationist who has made a contribution to community or statewide preservation through lifetime effort or a single significant project

1997

Ruth Joslin, Scituate
William Metz, South Kingstown

1996

Elizabeth Johnson, Pawtucket
Helene Lee Tessler, Bristol

1995

Issac G. Smith, Jr, Westerly

1994

Ruth Lebeck, Smithfield

1993

Carlton Brownell, Little Compton
Marian Fry, East Greenwich
Marjorie Matthews, Foster

Frederick C. Williamson Professional Service Award

Awarded to a professional individual or organization that has made a contribution to preservation over a period of years or in a single significant project

1997

Alan Leveille and the Public Archaeology Laboratory

1996

B. Clarkson Schoettle

1995

William D. Warner, FAIA

1994

Albert T. Klyberg

1993

Irving Haynes, FAIA
William H. Jordy

Past State Historic Preservation Award Recipients

1997

Cocumscussoc Association, North Kingstown
Candace Allen House, Providence
St Anthony's Home, Providence
Bridge Mill Power Station Museum, Pawtucket
Ewa Orzechowska, Newport
Warren Preservation Society

1996

Slater Mill, Pawtucket
Kit Matteson Tavern, West Greenwich
City of Providence Preservation Planning
Old Kent County Courthouse, East Greenwich
King's County Courthouse, South Kingstown
Shepard's, Providence
Samuel B. Conant House, Central Falls

1995

Rhode Island School of Design, Providence
Southeast Lighthouse, Block Island
Winsor Blacksmith Shop, Foster
576 Broad Street and 39-41 Harvard Street, Providence
John Hunt House, East Providence
Preservation Society of Pawtucket Children's Education Program

1994

Witherbee School, Middletown
Memorial and Library Association of Westerly
Nicholas Brown, John Carter Brown, Angela Brown Fischer
West End Preservation Apartments, Providence
Newport Army-Navy YMCA
Elmwood Foundation for Architectural and Historical Preservation,
Providence
The Museum of Newport History at Brick Market House

1993

Preservation Society of Newport County
Kenyon's Department Store, Wakefield
Burnside Memorial Hall, Bristol
East Greenwich Comprehensive and Preservation Plans
1258 and 1262 Kingstown Road, South Kingstown
Crescent Park Carousel, East Providence
Rose Island Light House, Newport
Providence Preservation Society Children's Education Program