

THE 10TH ANNUAL RHODE ISLAND STATE

# Historic Preservation Awards 2002

THE RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION

**T**he 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 three 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 1996. She contributed her time, her knowledge, and, most importantly, her vision to shape Rhode Island's state historic preservation program. At the same time, she 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.

John H. Chafee served Rhode Island as governor from 1963 to 1969 and as United States Senator from 1976 to 1999. He was a leader in advocating for historic preservation and the natural environment at both the state and federal levels. In his honor, the Commission established the John H. Chafee Award for Public Service in Preservation.

We salute the recipients of the 2002 State Historic Preservation Awards.

ANTOINETTE F. DOWNING  
VOLUNTEER SERVICE AWARD



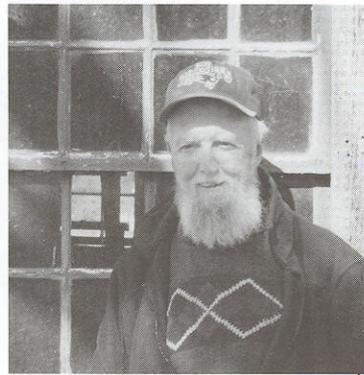
Anne Utter

For forty years Anne Utter has been a respected advocate and an articulate voice for historic preservation on both local and state levels. Anne works tirelessly within the conventional governance system, but often steps outside when necessary.

As an incorporator and president of The Chorus of Westerly, Anne helped to save and reuse the former Immaculate Conception Church (1886) as the Chorus's performance hall. She worked with Antoinette Downing to list the building on the National Register of Historic Places, and organized the Westerly Center for the Arts to raise funds for its purchase and restoration. Anne was the first woman to serve on the Board of the Westerly Memorial and Library Association. She and other board members fought town proposals to take land from Wilcox Park (1899), one of Rhode Island's outstanding historic landscapes. Anne helped to found Old Town Hall Museum Association, which saved the former town hall (1874) from demolition, and the Westerly-Pawcatuck Joint Development Task Force, which addresses economic development in the two historic downtowns.

Anne's statewide activities for historic preservation and the arts include service on the boards of Preserve Rhode Island (formerly The Heritage Trust of Rhode Island), Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, and Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission. With her husband George, Anne is a source of information and inspiration about local history. Whenever a civic project involves historic resources, Anne incites an irresistible community consciousness that historic preservation is the right thing to do.

FREDERICK C. WILLIAMSON  
PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP AWARD



Stephen J. Tyson

For more than thirty years, Steve Tyson of Warwick has set the standard for restoration contracting in Rhode Island, eastern Connecticut, and southeastern Massachusetts. After receiving a degree in historic preservation from Roger Williams University, Steve began his career as a restoration carpenter. In 1979, he founded Architectural Preservation Group, which provides all aspects of restoration contracting, including inspection of historic buildings, structural evaluation and repair, design, and reproduction of historic elements, as well as carpentry, masonry, and painting.

Steve's restoration activity speaks to a range of project scale and property type. Large-scale restoration projects, ranging from major structural repair through minute detailing, include the 17th-century James Greene House in Warwick; the 18th-century Nathanael Greene Homestead in Coventry; the 19th-century Moffett Mill in Lincoln and Jamestown Windmill, bridges and gazebos in Providence's Roger Williams Park, and turn-of-the-century Charles Loeffl carousels in Riverside and Pawtucket. Smaller projects include cornice and roof restoration of the Kingston Free Library. When a building can no longer be preserved on site, Steve is a master at disassembly, removal, and reconstruction, such as with the Hanaway Blacksmith Shop in Lincoln and the Thomas Arnold House in Warwick. Through the number of contractors who have trained with him over the years, Steve has significantly affected the overall quality of restoration across the state.

JOHN H. CHAFEE  
PUBLIC SERVICE AWARD



Steven M. Costantino  
Gordon D. Fox  
Antonio J. Pires

Thanks to the strong leadership of three members of the Rhode Island House of Representatives—Steven M. Costantino, Gordon D. Fox, and Antonio J. Pires—new tax incentives make rehabilitation of historic buildings more affordable for more Rhode Islanders.

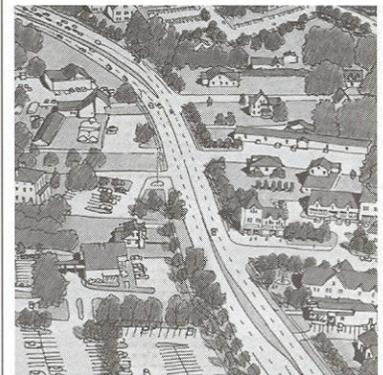
During the General Assembly's 2000 Session, Rep. Costantino introduced the Historic Homeownership Assistance Act. The new legislation improved an existing tax credit for homeowners by doubling the amount of the tax benefit from 10% of rehabilitation costs to 20%, increasing the amount of tax credit that can be taken each year, and extending the benefit to two- and three-family homes.

During the 2001 Session, Rep. Fox introduced the Historic Preservation Investment Tax Credit. The law allows a tax credit equal to 30% of the cost of rehabilitating income-producing historic buildings. Similar to the federal rehab tax credit, the new Rhode Island law is considered one of the best in the nation.

Winning the support of the House Finance Committee was critical to the adoption of these two tax credits. Rep. Pires actively supported both tax measures and met with advocates to work out the details. He understands the importance of investing in historic properties and recognizes how preservation efforts stimulate businesses, create housing, and revitalize our older neighborhoods.

Rhode Island preservationists are grateful to Reps. Costantino, Fox, and Pires and the entire membership of the General Assembly for enacting this important legislation and to Governor Almond for signing the bill.

PLANNING



Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management for South County Technical Planning Assistance Project

Known colloquially as South County, Rhode Island's southernmost county represents a remarkable coalescence of natural and built elements, an environment unlike any other in the Northeast, if not the whole country. A hilly watershed for the Wood and Pawcatuck Rivers, it has been home to centuries of small-scale agricultural, industrial, village, and summer-colony development. By the late 20th century, however, this once isolated region had become more accessible and desirable for intensive development.

In the early 1990s, town planners and planning board members in the area began to meet informally to discuss both local and regional issues. As their conversations continued, regional priorities for the area emerged, including protecting public drinking water, planning for growth, and preserving farmland and open space. RI-DEM and consultants Dodson Associates and the University of Rhode Island collaborated with the Rural Lands Coalition, South County planners, Washington County Regional Planning Council, and South County Watershed Partnership to develop a creative land-use strategy for accommodating growth while minimizing impacts to environmental and community character.

Their work was published in 2001 as *The South County Design Manual*. Following that effort, RI-DEM produced a comprehensive regional approach for the area's natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources in *The South County Greenspace Protection Strategy*, published in 2002. Both projects are models for integrated regional planning that not only takes in multiple communities but also considers multiple resources.

## STEWARDSHIP



Hopkinton Historical Association for the Union Meeting House

Built on the north side of West Road around 1790, the Union Meeting House was originally intended for the use of all Christian denominations. The modest center-entrance, end-gable-roof building was moved to a lot at the intersection of Town House Road and Main Street in 1826; the Town of Hopkinton assisted in the move and reserved the right to use the building for town meetings, which occurred here for thirty-five years until a Town Hall was completed. Seventh Day Baptists met here regularly from 1835 to 1973. In 1981, they turned the building over to the Hopkinton Historical Association.

Since acquiring the prominently sited building, the Historical Association has undertaken a careful and thoughtful preservation program. At first, some stabilization was required, including shoring up the building and repairing the roof. After a Restoration Committee was formed in 1995, the approach has become more comprehensive and methodical: tower, shutter, and fence repair; exterior painting; and interior improvements. A new heating system makes the building accessible to community groups year round, and handrails at the doorways make it easier to enter. Installation of vapor barriers and a ventilation system protect the Association's collection of documents and artifacts.

Just as the building served a variety of different denominations in its early years, the Hopkinton Historical Association continues to make it available for a variety of local community events.

## STEWARDSHIP AND EDUCATION



Newport Historical Society for the Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House

Built for Stephen Mumford, Sr. around 1675, the Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House is the oldest house in Newport and one of the oldest in Rhode Island. Enlarged by additions through the 18th century and remodeled inside in the early 1760s, it remained a family residence until 1911. In 1927, the Newport Historical Society hired restoration architect Norman M. Isham to restore the house and remove later additions.

In 1995, the Society commissioned a historic structure report, conducted by architect Martha Werenfels and Preservation Cooperative principals Robert Major and Mary Turkel. Restoration and stabilization projects included replacing clapboards, reshingling the roof, and preventing water infiltration. State-of-the-art paint analysis followed: exteriors by Bryan Powell, interiors by John Vaughan. The Society collaborated with the Newport Garden Club to study and restore the grounds and initiated an extensive archaeological investigation of the entire site. Led by Salve Regina University professor James Garman, the investigation has already revealed the Wanton-Lyman-Hazard House to be one of the most important sites in the northeastern United States.

Beyond the impeccable restoration, the Newport Historical Society sets an exemplary standard for integrating scholarship into interpretation, through tours of the house, research projects, and development of evolving museum exhibitions.

## PRESERVATION PROJECT



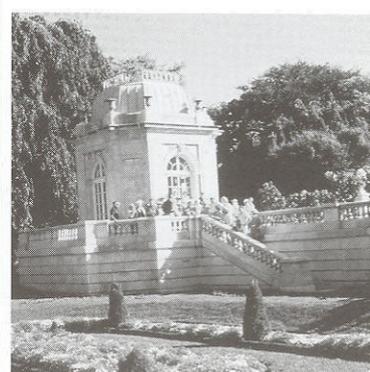
Dunes Club Gatehouse, Narragansett

Built in 1928-29 to designs by New York architect and Narragansett summer-resident Kenneth Murchison (1872-1938), the prominently sited Dunes Club Gatehouse is the only remnant of a fantastic Norman/Spanish recreational complex that stretched along the nearby beach. The original clubhouse, a rambling stucco-and-half-timber concoction with red-tile roof, was destroyed by the Hurricane of 1938 and succeeded by a less flamboyant replacement by Philadelphia architects Purves, Cope & Stewart.

Over time, the picturesque character of the gatehouse eroded, with original materials painted over, shutters removed, windows replaced, and entrances closed. After a speeding car crashed into the building, examination revealed extensive deterioration of the underlying wood structure. Faced with the practical decision to demolish the by-then functionally archaic structure, the club's Board of Governors decided that the historic gatehouse was too important to lose and called for a careful restoration.

Working with architect Clifford Renshaw, the club thoroughly repaired the structure and carefully restored the exterior. Old photographs and structural evidence provided information about the configuration and detail of the original windows, shutters, decorative brickwork, stuccowork, and roofing shingles. The project has returned a Narragansett landmark to its original appearance as recorded in the evocative rendering Murchison prepared for the Dunes Club's opening in June 1929.

## PRESERVATION PROJECT



The Elms Garden, Newport

Soon after Mr. and Mrs. Edward Julius Berwind moved into their house, The Elms, the couple acquired additional acreage at the west end of their property. They again turned to their architect, Horace Trumbauer, this time to design a sunken garden. Executed between 1907 and 1914, the landscape includes a series of interlocking terraces, pathways, pavilions, parterres, and fountains. French landscape-designer Jacques Gréber advised on the parterre's design of boxwood, euonymus, and annuals. The garden design was published in *American Estates and Gardens* (1904) and *Architectural Record* (1925).

By the 1990s, the landscape suffered from loss of plant material, failure of its drainage and irrigation systems, deterioration of its sculpture, and need for cyclical maintenance of the architectural features. To return the garden to its 1914 appearance, the Preservation Society of Newport County undertook a four-phase restoration project: careful research of the historic development of the gardens during the Berwinds' ownership; a site assessment plan by landscape architect Thomas J. Elmore and replanting of original plant material; restoration of the drainage and irrigation systems and the pathways; and rehabilitation of the architectural features. Completed in the summer of 2001, the garden restoration at The Elms is a model for the comprehensive analysis and careful restoration of an important historic landscape.

PRESERVATION PROJECT



Great Road Transportation Enhancement Project, Lincoln

Carried out by the Rhode Island Department of Transportation and the Town of Lincoln, the Great Road Transportation Enhancement Project focused on Rhode Island's oldest highway (now State Route 123), a 17th-century road through an 18th-century agricultural community with a 19th-century industrial component. It reinforces and protects previous preservation activity in an imaginative new way.

The Great Road Transportation Enhancement Project included three components. The project acquired and protected open space surrounding the 1687 Eleazer Arnold House to recreate an appropriate meadow-landscape setting and establish a walking trail from Arnold meadow to the Town-owned Chace Farm. Secondly, the project focused on Moffett Mill, a 19th-century water-powered machine shop and textile mill sited within a few feet of the roadway edge. The careful restoration preserved as much of the original timber frame and historic materials as possible. The final component was the acquisition of Hearthiside (1810) and development of a plan for the interpretation and public use of Great Road's grandest house.

The Great Road project is an outstanding example of RIDOT's philosophy of "thinking beyond the pavement." RIDOT's partnership with the Town of Lincoln builds upon local efforts that add to the quality of life in Lincoln, enhances a destination for visitors to the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor, and reduces the potential need for future highway reconstruction and widening.

PRESERVATION PROJECT



Harbor House, Newport

For the better part of a decade a rambling collection of historic buildings sat vacant and deteriorating at the foot of the Newport Bridge in Newport's Point neighborhood. The oldest, built in the mid-19th century and later enlarged as a house for the Auchincloss family, became at the turn of the last century a residence for two successive orders of Roman Catholic nuns, who added St. Francis House on Battery Street and a caretaker's cottage in 1907 and a chapel in 1914. In 1965, the mid-19th-century Rice House was moved and attached to St. Francis House. The property served as a religious retreat for nearly a century.

After the retreat closed, many were interested in developing the property. But long-time neighbor Adé Bethune had a dream of her own: an independent-living, self-help senior community. She founded a non-profit organization, Star of the Sea, and worked with Church Community Housing to develop the property into thirty-seven units of affordable housing. Realizing the dream, however, took \$5.8 million and nearly ten years, starting in the early 1990s.

To transform the complex, architects from The Newport Collaborative restored the buildings' exteriors, renovated the interiors while retaining significant features, and discreetly connected the buildings with circulation space that makes units on three separate levels easily accessible for all the residents of Harbor House, including Adé Bethune.

PRESERVATION PROJECT



Stadium Theatre, Woonsocket

Conceived by community leader Arthur Darman as a civic monument of commercial enterprise, the Stadium Theatre incorporated Woonsocket's first deluxe movie house and a four-story office building. This "palatial playhouse" opened to great fanfare in September of 1926. While the Darman family owned the theatre for more than sixty years, competition from suburban theatres forced its closing in the late 1980s. Its future was uncertain.

Concerned about the theatre, then-mayor Francis Lanctot began to investigate options for the Stadium. In the early 1990s, a small group created the SOS ("Save Our Stadium") campaign to advocate for the theatre's reuse. Although the effort started slowly, community support grew steadily; and assistance from U.S. Senator Jack Reed provided a big boost. In 1996, the Stadium Theatre Foundation, a private non-profit organization, was formed to acquire the building and begin its reclamation. The four-phase project, begun in 1998, included making the building completely accessible; securing the exterior; completely upgrading electrical, mechanical, and ventilating systems; and restoring the interiors from the lobby to the auditorium. The restored theatre reopened in September 2001, the seventy-fifth anniversary of its original opening.

The Stadium Theatre Foundation remains largely a volunteer effort. The theatre is today as much a symbol of civic pride as it was when it first opened in September 1926.

PAST AWARD RECIPIENTS

Antoinette F. Downing  
Volunteer Service Award

- 2001 Tina C. Regan
- 2000 Elizabeth S. Warren
- 1999 Ralph E. Carpenter
- 1998 Robert Merriam

Frederick C. Williamson  
Professional Leadership Award

- 2001 William L. Kite, Jr.
- 2000 Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Staff
- 1999 Charles Jeffers Moore
- 1998 Lombard John Pozzi

Historic Preservation Awards

- 2001 The Paul King Foundry, Johnston  
Roberta Mudge Humble  
Wildacre, Newport  
Kelton-Davis and Luther-Fenner Waterman Cemeteries, Johnston  
Providence Performing Arts Center  
Crawford House Restoration, Buttonwoods  
Holmes Block, 1 State Street, Bristol  
Providence Parks Department for Roger Williams Park
- 2000 State Alms House/Center General  
Salve Regina University  
Neighbors Lane  
Museum of Work & Culture  
First Unitarian Church  
National Rubber Company/  
Kaiser Mill  
Aquidneck Island Land Trust
- 1999 Mount Hope Farm, Bristol  
Washington Square Advisory Committee, Newport  
Westerly Railroad Station  
Fletcher Building, Providence  
West Broadway Neighborhood Association Headquarters, Providence  
Boyd's Gristmill, Middletown  
Crompton Library, West Warwick  
Kathy Abbass  
Newport Fire Department
- 1998 Providence Art Club  
Kingston Railroad Station  
Ledge Point Cottage  
Globe Village  
Valley Falls Heritage Park  
Historic Preservation Program and Center for Historic Preservation, Roger Williams University  
Rhode Island State House Rotunda  
Redwood Library and Athenæum