

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

historic name Providence Jewelry Manufacturing Historic District (Boundary Increase)

other names/site number Jewelry District

## 2. Location

street & number The area bounded by Route 195, Route 95, Point Street, Parsonage, South, Hospital, Elbow, Ashcroft, Richmond, Eddy, and Ship Streets

<input type="checkbox"/>	not for publication
<input type="checkbox"/>	vicinity

city or town Providence

state Rhode Island code RI county Providence code 007 zip code 02903

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,  
I hereby certify that this x nomination     request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property x meets     does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

    national          statewide      x local

Signature of certifying official/Title \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission  
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property     meets     does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_ State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

    entered in the National Register          determined eligible for the National Register

    determined not eligible for the National Register          removed from the National Register

    other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

Document page number   2  

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box.)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
11	1	buildings
		district
		site
		structure
		object
11	1	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

  18  

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

INDUSTRY/manufacturing facility

EDUCATION/college, research facility

COMMERCE/TRADE/business

COMMERCE/TRADE/business, professional

DOMESTIC/single dwelling, multiple dwelling

DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

 

HEALTH CARE/hospital

 

 

 

 

 

 

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER/19<sup>th</sup>-c. industrial, 20<sup>th</sup>-c. industrial

foundation:   stone, brick, concrete  

EARLY REPUBLIC/Federal

walls:   brick, wood, concrete, stucco  

LATE VICTORIAN/Second Empire

 

 

roof:   Stone, asphalt, synthetics  

 

other:

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## Narrative Description

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### Summary Paragraph

The Providence Jewelry Manufacturing Historic District, located just south of Downtown and west of the Providence River, contains twenty-one multistory factory buildings; five single-story shops or garages; and three houses, two of which were adapted to industrial or commercial uses for a period of time; all representing the area's development from a fashionable residential neighborhood established in the first half of the nineteenth century to the center of Providence's jewelry industry in the early- to mid-twentieth century. Now physically distinct because of the construction of Interstate 95 and 195 to the north and west, the Jewelry District is a small but intact fragment of the larger West Side area that followed a similar evolution from residential to industrial and commercial uses in the nineteenth century. The district occupies the better part of eleven blocks in an irregular grid pattern with Eddy, Richmond, Chestnut and Hospital Streets serving as the major thoroughfares and Clifford Ship, Bassett, Elbow, Elm, South and Point Streets forming the cross streets. Large brick and reinforced concrete factory buildings, often occupying entire blocks, are the dominant visual elements. Interspersed among them are a variety of smaller buildings that range from the nineteenth-century frame and brick houses clustered near the center of the district, to the handsome stone Elm Street Machine Shop of 1848. Noteworthy intrusions, in addition to the interstate highway, include rear additions on several factory buildings and two houses, the parking lots created by the demolition of numerous houses and shops and the application of vinyl siding and new windows and other alterations on the houses. This latter statement only applies to 18 Bassett and, to some degree, to the Lewis House now.

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### Narrative Description

The earliest of the jewelry factories are impressive five-, six-, and seven-story brick and heavy timber structures with pier and panel bearing walls, segmental-arched windows and corbeled cornices. The first was the Champlin Building (1888), followed by the Irons and Russell Building (1903) and the James Doran and Sons Building (1907) and they are clustered on Chestnut Street, at the northern end of the district. The Vesta Knitting Mills complex (1893, 1903) located on Imperial Place on the western side of the district, is similar in appearance, though it was built in part as a textile mill. The brick mill construction factories were followed by reinforced-concrete buildings, including Rhode Island's earliest examples of the mushroom column, flat-slab style of construction developed by C.A.P. Turner, the A.T. Wall Building (1910) and the Doran-Speidel Building (1912). The reinforced-concrete factories of the twenties exhibit curtain walls of brick and glass, accentuated in the case of the Little Nemo Building (1928) and the Coro Building (1929) by moderate Art Deco styling in their parapets. The Coro Building was particularly noteworthy at the time of its construction for the unprecedented amount of floor space devoted to one jewelry company's operation, 160,000 square feet. No significant construction occurred in the district during the years of the Great Depression and World War II.

Soon after the war, two two-story, steel frame, brick clad manufacturing buildings with horizontal bands of steel industrial sash were erected in the district: the Jewelry Manufacturing Building (1947) at 33 Bassett Street and the Claverick Building (Samuel Lerner, architect, 1948) at 161 Clifford Street. Both housed jewelry-related companies and are early examples of a type of industrial building that would become common in the post-war years. In 1956, Joseph A. Brian built a reinforced concrete building at 111 Chestnut Street for his jewelry and general industrial supply business. This two-story building features joist-slab technology, a refinement in concrete slab technology that utilized a series of shallow T-beams in the floor system.

In the 1970s and '80s, several of the district's larger industrial buildings were converted for residential or mixed uses that combined residential, professional or commercial use. These include the Champlin, Irons and Russell, A.T. Wall, and Coro Buildings. The Little Nemo Building and Doran Building (2) have been acquired by Brown University Medical School. The Brian Supply Building has been converted to professional use. Among the larger buildings of the district, the Claverick Building and the Jewelry Manufacturing Building are vacant or near-vacant at present.

On the block bounded by Bassett, Chestnut and Elbow Streets is the district's oldest building. The Samuel Lewis House (c. 1825), one of the few surviving Federal houses on the west side of the Providence River, is a two-and-a-half-story, end-gable roof, houses with side-hall plans. The Lewis House is brick, with flat stone lintels and a front entrance with a fanlight (multi panes of the fanlight have been replaced with a single light) transom surmounted by a stone molding with a keystone. 18 Bassett Street is a somewhat later (c. 1840), more modest, end-gable roof, frame house, originally one-and-a-half-stories with vernacular Greek Revival styling. It was raised over a brick ground story and a frame shop front was installed when a bakery was established on the premises (c. 1910). The third house, and the only one to continue in use as a residence, is the frame, two-and-a-half-story Arthur B. and Laura A. Weeks House a lodging house at 27 Elbow Street (1886), with a mansard roof and prominent classical moldings.

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## INVENTORY

Properties are listed in alphabetical order by street, then numerical order by address. The address number is followed by the Tax Assessor Plat and Lot designation. All properties are considered contributing unless identified otherwise. Non-contributing properties are marked with the code NC in the margin.

Contributing structures include buildings that retain their integrity which were erected during the district's period of development from its origins as a residential neighborhood in the 1820s, into the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when it was the center of the Providence jewelry industry. The majority of the buildings are examples of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial design which are impressive by virtue of their size and the rhythmic repetition of horizontal and vertical patterns in their facades. Although two of the early houses have been altered to varying degrees by the installation of new windows, the application of vinyl siding and asphalt shingles, or the construction of unsympathetic additions, in all cases original trim, such as door and window frames, cornices, etc., remains and the houses still constitute an important part of the historic fabric. Unsympathetic 20<sup>th</sup>-century alterations to the 1886 Weeks House have been removed and original exterior architectural detail restored. These two houses represent the larger number of dwellings that stood side by side with the industrial buildings up until the mid- 20th century.

## CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

### BASSETT STREET

- 12 (21:84) Schmidt Electric Co. extension to Samuel Lewis House (pre-1951): This is a two-story, flat-roofed brick and cement block building built off of the rear (west) wall of the Samuel Lewis House at 137 Chestnut Street (q.v.). Schmidt Electric Co., an electrical contractor and repair shop, purchased the Lewis House in 1940 and conducted business there until ca 1990. This industrial addition to 137 Chestnut St (now numbered 12 Bassett) was built by Schmidt Electric Co. between 1937 and 1951. The Providence Senior Center currently occupies both buildings.
- 14 (21:428) Century Electrical Supply Building (1959): This is a single-story, flat-roofed, cement block building with modern replacement windows on the façade. It shares the same lot as the Weeks house (29 Elbow, q.v.). Century Electrical Supply, one of a number of electrical supply houses in the district, built it as a warehouse. The building is currently in commercial use.
- 16 (21:83) James Tyrell Tin Shop (pre-1937): This is a margined cement block industrial building with steel industrial sash windows erected between 1926 and 1937 by tinsmith James A. Tyrell, who occupied it until ca. 1961. At the time of construction a dwelling (also owned by Tyrell in 1937) occupied the front of the lot, which is now a parking area. The building has changed little from the time of its construction. The building is currently in commercial use.
- 18 (21:82) House (c. 1840, enlarged c. 1910): This house was apparently built as a 1½-story, end-gable-roof, frame house with an interior brick chimney, trimmed in the vernacular Greek Revival style with a prominent cornice (now vinyl clad) and a pedimented gable. About 1910 the house was raised on a brick ground story with segmentally arched windows and a shopfront on the north end. The storefront has two large showcase windows flanking recessed double doors, all surmounted by a band of transoms. The wooden frame of the storefront has a modest amount of built-up, vaguely classical trim. A single-story brick shop with a shallow gable roof and segmental-arched windows and doorways was built in the rear of the house at the same time. A small passageway connects the house and the shop. The shop was originally a bakery, but served as a cabinetmaker's shop from the 1930s to the 1980s. The upper stories of the house have been trimmed with vinyl siding and there are two single-story, concrete-block additions to the rear of the shop. The building and its southern extensions now house a delicatessen and a nightclub.
- 28 (21:418) Bassett Street Garage (ca. 1926, enlarged ca. 1955 and ca. 1970): This is a single-story brick garage on a concrete foundation, acquired by adjacent Imperial Knife to serve as a factory building (see Vesta Knitting Mills below). These alterations included the bricking-in of an original large auto entrance and the insertion of metal frame windows. One of several early 20<sup>th</sup>-century garages in the Jewelry District, the Bassett Street Garage first appears on the 1926 Providence Plat Map as a masonry building with brick veneer on the front elevation. The building served as a garage operated by the Maguire Brothers Trucking Company from 1932 into the 1940s. In the 1950s and 1960s it was used for industrial storage.

Between 1951 and 1955 a concrete block addition was built on the west, more than doubling the size of the building. By 1970, this addition (also of concrete block) had been extended northerly to fully occupy the irregularly-shaped lot on the corner of Bassett and Hospital. This addition has been *trompe l'oeil* painted to appear as brick. The original building and its additions now serve as office condominiums. The original garage door on Bassett Street has been partially bricked-in and converted to a window.

- 33 (21:52) Jewelry Manufacturing Building (1947): This is a two-story, flat-roofed, brick veneered, steel frame industrial building. The building features horizontal band windows on both floors with a continuous concrete lintel capping them as well as a slender concrete sill below. The windows have been replaced with aluminum sash that are filled with opaque panels. The main entrance, set in a two-story recess at the corner of the building, is defined by a stainless steel canopy that wraps partially around the side elevation. The E.A. Adams Company, a jewelry manufacturer, was a major tenant in this building until 1982.
- 41-3 (22:54) Roberts Paper Company Building and garage (1948). This is a single story, flat-roofed building with an adjoining garage wing. The windows, which are double width in the façade and regular width on the side, are filled with replacement aluminum sash. Roberts Paper Company was established in the 1920s as a supplier of jewelry boxes in a building on Basset Street that is now demolished. In 1948 the company built the present office (43 Bassett) and warehouse/garage (41 Bassett). The office is presently occupied by Merchants Overseas, a supplier of crystal and metal jewelry components. The warehouse/garage is occupied by Domaine, a fashion jewelry manufacturer. These two buildings are the last in the Jewelry District to retain an association with costume jewelry manufacture or sales.

#### CHESTNUT STREET

- 95 (24:26) Irons & Russell Building (1903-04): A six-story, flat-roof, brick factory building with large segmental-arched windows separated by narrow piers and capped with a corbeled cornice. A rectangular building occupying a corner lot, it has side entrances to the upper stories on Chestnut and Clifford Streets. The Chestnut Street entrance has a brownstone surround with a round-arched doorway and a projecting entablature above with "Irons & Russell Building" engraved in the frieze. Originally designed to have two stores on the ground floor, the building had seven full-length showcase windows along Chestnut Street and three on Clifford Street, with a corner entrance and cast iron Roman Doric columns dividing the window bays. The windows have been replaced with stuccoed panels and small transoms and the commercial area is now unoccupied.
- 111 (21:420) Brian Supply Company (1956): A two-story, flat-roofed, reinforced concrete building utilizing joist-slab construction. The building is sheathed in Roman brick with window bands of aluminum double-hung sash. Built as a supply company for jewelry and general industrial needs, the building occupies the southwestern corner of Chestnut and Clifford Streets with a large, stuccoed, concrete brick extension, two stories high, along Clifford Street. A stainless steel canopy characteristic of 1950s commercial architecture shelters the southeast corner main entrance. Original, two-story glass brick windows provide diffused lighting in the main (southeast) stairwell. The building was converted for professional use by the architectural firm of Durkee Brown Viveiros and Werenfels, which occupies the third floor.
- 116 (21:21) Champlin Building, now known as the Hedison Building (1888, 1901): This is a five-story, flat-roof, sharply-angled, brick building that conforms to its trapezoidally-shaped lot at the intersection of Chestnut and Ship Streets. The exterior pier and panel walls have segmental-arched windows and a corbeled cornice. Original multi-pane sash set in segmental arch openings have been replaced with single-pane aluminum sash. The southern half of the building was added in 1901 in the same style as the northern half, but with a low, single-story, flat-roof, brick addition on the rear. There are plain entrances in both the Chestnut Street and Ship Street facades. In 1978 the building was converted to condominium lofts and retains mixed commercial and residential use. A narrow, single-story brick storehouse (90 Ship Street) on the east elevation of the Champlin Building once housed Rayhill and Green, a supplier to the jewelry trade.
- 137 (21:84) Samuel Lewis House (ca. 1825): Also known as the Thomas A. Doyle House, this is a 2½-story, end-gable, brick house with a side-hall plan, built in the Federal style. Three bays wide and five bays deep, on a raised basement of ashlar and rubble-stone masonry, the house has its front door slightly recessed

within a doorway with a round stone arch with a keystone. Over the door, an original fanlight with decorative wooden molding has been altered with the insertion of a single pane. The windows have flat stone lintels and wooden sills. The facade has all stretcher brickwork, while the side walls have a brick bond of nine rows of stretchers to one of headers. There is an internal brick chimney. In 1921 the house was converted to industrial use by Egan Machine Tool Company, manufacturers of specialty machinery and tools. One floor also housed Rabinowitz and Company, a jewelry and metal specialties shop. Schmidt Electric Company, an electrical contractor and repair shop, purchased the Lewis House in 1940 and conducted business there until ca 1990. Prior to 1951, the company built a two-story, flat-roof, brick and cement block building in the rear (q.v. 12 Bassett Street). The house now serves as commercial office and studio space. Alterations include an extra window added in the center of the north side, a one-story greenhouse addition on the south side and a two-story glazed passageway on the west connecting to 18 Bassett Street.

- 150 (21:99) Doran Building (1907): This is a seven-story, flat-roof, brick building with heavy timber framing, segmental-arched windows and doorways and a corbeled cornice. A large granite keystone over one of three entrances on Chestnut Street bears the date 1907. The building occupies a corner lot at Chestnut and Elbow Streets. In the 1980s it was subdivided into condominiums for commercial and light industrial use.
- 155 (21:86) Pilgrim Manufacturing Co. Building (1940) Originally attached to the north wall of the Pardon Clarke House (ca. 1823, demolished 2009), this is a free-standing, two-bay, two-story, flat-roofed, brick and concrete block industrial building. The foundation is concrete. The wall exposed during the demolition of the Pardon Clarke House has been sheathed in corrugated steel. The Pardon Clarke House remained in residential use until circa 1920. From 1924 to 1940 the building housed a succession of enameling companies. Pilgrim Manufacturing Company (enamel manufacturers) occupied the building in 1937 and likely built the industrial addition that stands alone today in 1940-41.
- 161 (21:433) Galkin Company Building (ca.1934). This was originally a single-story, brick garage built as an auto-body shop. The roofline is stepped and has ceramic coping. The automobile entrance has been replaced with a central pedestrian entrance and original multi-pane industrial steel windows have been replaced with tall, two-light aluminum replacements. After 1997, a metal-clad one-story penthouse was added at the rear of the building for residential use.
- 171 (21:385) Providence Wholesale Drug Company Warehouse (1924). This is a two-story, brick industrial building with significant alterations to the appearance of the façade. On this elevation, the large windows originally filled with multi-pane industrial steel sash now have modern fixed 3-light aluminum sash. The central entrance has a replacement glass and aluminum door. The original garage door opening has been filled in with a recessed pedestrian entrance double glass and metal doors. An original parapet has been sheathed in sheet metal. The north and south elevations retain significant evidence of original fenestration. Original 24-light industrial steel sash with 8-light hoppers survive on the ground floor of the north and west elevations. The glass on these ground level windows has been painted red.

#### CLAVERICK STREET

- 55 See A.T. Wall Company, 162 Clifford Street.

#### CLIFFORD STREET

- NC 146 (21:422) Brian Supply Warehouse (1962): This is a two-story, brick and cement block industrial building built by Brian Supply Co. as a warehouse for their main building at 111 Chestnut St. (q.v.). It was extensively remodeled and converted for professional use ca. 1990.
- 161 (24:537) Claverick Building (1948), Samuel Lerner, architect: This is a, two-story, steel frame building with brick veneer, a recessed entry, and continuous bands of ten-light steel-frame sash, some of which have 4-light hoppers. This band of windows has a pronounced concrete lintel and a thinner sill. Originally built to house multiple jewelry-related tenants, this building, now partially vacant, continues to house a small jewelry manufacturer on the second floor.

162 (21:14) A.T. Wall Company (1908): Bowerman Brothers, architects (also known as 55 Claverick Street). This is a 4-story, flat-roof, reinforced concrete structure, built with the mushroom-column, flat-slab construction system developed by C.A.P. Turner. Ca. 1990 the exterior was resurfaced, the original entrance trim and doors removed and replaced and window sash replaced. Its concrete exterior walls, now stuccoed, are arranged in the pier and spandrel style; the original multi-pane windows with transoms over double-hung sashes have been replaced by aluminum windows with operable hoppers at the bottom. The original main entrance in the center of the Clifford Street facade is through a four-bay, recessed, doorway and an entablature framing the doors and transoms. This entrance is now subordinated to a rear, parking lot entrance. The interior is notable for the 30-inch octagonal columns which have utility holes in the capitals to accommodate pipes and wires running from floor to floor. Reinforcing rods extend from the roof and north elevation to facilitate building expansion. There is a single-story wing in the rear that contained the annealing house.

#### ELBOW STREET

29 (21:428) Arthur B. and Laura Weeks House (1886): This is a 2½-story, mansard-roof, frame house with a side-hall plan. Three bays wide and five bays deep, it has a front door flanked by sidelights and a transom recessed within an entryway. This entrance is framed by Doric pilasters and an entablature with modillions and dentil molding. The two-over-two double-hung sash windows have architrave trim and small triangular aprons. There are prominent bracketed cornices over the first-story windows. The main cornice is also pronounced and above it, on the slate-covered roof, there are dormers with slightly-projecting gables with incised designs in the tympana. In the course of a recent restoration, 20<sup>th</sup>-century alterations that included the application of asphalt shingles over clapboard have been reversed. The building continues to be used as an apartment building, the only residential building still used as such in the district.

#### ELM STREET

116 (21:202) Elm Street Machine Shop (1848-, c. 1863, 1907): This is a 2½-story, end-gable, random ashlar masonry building with a single-story, end gable wing of the same stone construction on the northeast. The building has huge round-arched freight doors, graduated in size, in each story of either gable end. Full-length multiple-pane windows with double-hung sashes light the interior, while the top story is lit by long trap-door monitors on either slope of the roof. Built on the east flank of the building, a four-story, flat-roofed, brick tower, two bays square, with segmental-arched windows and a corbeled cornice dates to 1863. Significant demolition of attached industrial buildings erected by the Providence Gas Company between 1863 and 1907 was carried out in the 1990s as part of rehabilitation and reuse of the 1848 Machine Shop. The rehabilitated Machine Shop now contains office space used by Brown University.

#### IMPERIAL PLACE

2 (21:412) Vesta Knitting Mills (1893, 1903), later known as Imperial Knife Company: The 1893 factory is a 6-story, flat-roof brick building with rounded corners, segmental-arched windows and a corbeled cornice, that runs east along Bassett Street from the intersection of Imperial Place and Bassett. Extending south along Imperial Place and east along Elm Street, the 1903 factory is a plainer, L-shaped, 6-story, flat-roof brick building with segmental-arched windows and granite sills. Between the north and south wings formed by these two buildings there is a complex of smaller brick buildings, including a two-story, gable-roof, brick building with segmental-arched windows that dates from c. 1888. There are two brick and one concrete-block, single-story flat-roofed outbuildings attached to the east side of the complex that were added in the 1950s and 1960s. The complex now houses many commercial and medical uses as well as a restaurant.

#### POINT STREET

167 (21:244) Coro Building (1929, 1947): Frank S. Perry, architect. This is a three-story, flat-roof, U-shaped, reinforced concrete building with pier and panel exterior walls. The panels are filled with large banks of industrial sash windows, with bands of beige brick beneath. The piers rise up to a low parapet that is trimmed with a moderate amount of Art Deco styling. The main entrance is in the center of the south facade, recessed between two projecting wings. A large aluminum-sheathed marquee shelters the doorway; the legend, "CORO BUILDING 1929", adorns the wall above; and the parapet swells in an ogee arch at the roofline.

Unlike the other factories in the district, the Coro Building has a front lawn planted with trees and shrubs and enclosed by an iron fence. The original contractor, the Edward Sturgeon Company, built the 3- and 4-story wing on the western end of the building in 1946-47 in a similar style, but without the parapet. A fifth story with similar fenestration was added to this later wing in the mid-1980s.

#### RICHMOND STREET

222 (21:132) Little Nemo Building (1928): Frank S. Perry, architect. This is a 3-story, flat-roof, reinforced concrete building with a penthouse setback from the historical roofline. It has curtain walls arranged in piers and spandrels with bands of windows with narrow Roman brick panels underneath. The wall is rounded at the corner of Ship and Richmond Streets. The concrete piers rise up to the roofline, where they are capped with arrow-like ornaments. There are also small corner parapets and a central parapet over the Richmond Street entrance with geometric Art Deco detailing. The Little Nemo Building was rehabilitated in 1978 for use as office space. At that time, the principal changes to the exterior were the removal of the original marquee and the installation of modern tinted glass with small corner casements in place of the original industrial sash windows. Although essential exterior design elements remain, a re-design of both the exterior and interior of this building has been carried out in the 2010-1 adaptation of this building as Brown University's Warren Alpert Medical School. Notable among the exterior alterations made in this reuse project are the replacement of windows installed in 1978 and the creation of a fourth floor set back from the historical roofline. Interior changes include the removal of some concrete columns (replaced with trusswork) in order to create two open plan lecture halls.

#### SHIP STREET

- 3 (20:352) J. & H. Electric Company, originally Kiernan Wholesale Drug Company (formerly 200 Richmond Street, 1922-23): This is a 3-story, flat-roof, brick building with a steel frame and a raised basement. It has pier and panel exterior walls, with the piers rising up to a low parapet and the panels recessed, with corbeling at the top. Windows are filled with metal industrial sash. The building, which conforms to its pentagonal corner lot, faces the intersection of Richmond and Ship Streets. The entrance is recessed within the corner bay. Converted to residential use, the building is now the Ship Street Lofts. A three-story porch of galvanized framing with wooden deck projects from the rear (east) elevation of the building.
- 26 (21:146) Manufacturers' Refining Company (1910): This is a small 2-story, flat-roof, brick building with segmental-arched windows and granite sills, and a segmental-arched central doorway with transom. A simple parapet with central and end piers provides the principal ornament to this modest building which was erected for a small gold-smelting company. This building is now occupied by a law firm.
- 60 (29:106) N.H. Haronian Building (1925): This is a three-story, flat-roof, reinforced concrete building with brick pier and panel walls, with large banks of industrial sash windows with flat brick arches and concrete sills. There is a recessed entrance, framed by piers with rounded corners, on the east side of the north facade. A cornice with a frieze band of vertical stretchers provides the principal ornament to this modestly-styled building. Built by Nazareth Haronian both to house his own small jewelry business and for rental use, the building was remodeled inside for use as an office building in 1983-84.
- 70 (21:105) Doran-Speidel Building (1912, 1964): Monks and Johnson, architects, 1912. This is a 5-story, flat-roof, reinforced-concrete building, built with the mushroom-column, flat-slab construction system developed by C.A.P. Turner. The concrete pier and spandrel exterior walls have large rectangular industrial sash windows and some distinctive decorative touches. The parapet and the concrete bands under the windows are paneled, while the piers have horizontal grooves reminiscent of quoining. Over the central entrance there is a false balcony with two engaged piers topped with ball finials, all executed in concrete. A 1964 addition built by the Speidel Corporation on the western end of the building closely replicates the earlier building, though the paneling and other ornamental touches were eliminated. It also has a raised single-story vestibule with a flat roof with aluminum coping which faces Chestnut Street. The building is now occupied by Brown University Medical School.
- 89 (21:29) W.H. Coe Building (1925-26): This is a 2-story, flat-roof, steel-framed brick building, finished with

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limestone trim. The pier and panel exterior walls have large rectangular windows with limestone sills and flat brick arches. The building conforms to its trapezoidal lot and has a rounded corner at the intersection of Ship and Clifford Streets. The entrance, on the eastern end of the south facade, has a classical frontispiece, with a shallow pediment and a pair of composite Doric and Ionic columns framing the recessed doorway. There is also coping on top of the parapet and a paneled frieze band over the second-story windows, both executed in limestone. The Coe Building was rehabilitated in 1983-84 for use as an office building. Original industrial steel sash windows (removed in the 1980s) have been replaced with aluminum frame multi-pane windows similar to the originals.

90 (21:21) See Champlin Building, 116 Chestnut St.

#### SOUTH STREET

100 (21:419) Alfred Company Building (1926): A two-story, flat-roofed, steel-framed brick building, this is an L-shaped structure with pier and panel exterior walls and large rectangular industrial sash windows. The central entrance on South Street is flanked by two tall banks of glass blocks with rounded corners. A parapet wall with shallow inset panels runs across the front of the building; behind it, a large skylight lights the front stair hall. Built by an investment company as a jewelry factory, the building is presently occupied by the Providence Children's Museum.

147 (21:187) Jonette Jewelry Building (1948): This is a two-story, brick-faced cement block, flat-roofed building with steel frame industrial sash windows. Built originally for Jonette Jewelry, the building currently houses a bicycle sales and repair business.

Document page number 10

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

INDUSTRY

**Period of Significance**

Ca. 1825 to 1961

**Significant Dates**

1823, 1848, 1888, 1893, 1907, 1910, 1912, 1928, 1929, 1947, 1948, 1954

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Various unknown, Samuel Lewis (137 Chestnut St.) Martin and Hall (Irons and Russell Bldg.), Bowerman Brothers (A.T. Wall Bldg.), Monks and Johnson (Doran-Speidel Building), Frank S. Perry (Little Nemo and Coro Buildings), Samuel Lerner (Claverick Building)

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**Period of Significance (justification)**

This period extends from the erection of the first surviving residence to the date fifty years before the present date (2011) to encompass the historic resources that contribute to the initial development of this neighborhood and its subsequent development as the center of the Providence jewelry industry from the late nineteenth century into the middle decades of the twentieth century. This revision of the original nomination incorporates as contributing buildings erected in the area from 1947 to 1954.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

N/A

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Providence Jewelry Manufacturing Historic District is significant as a visually distinctive concentration of buildings related to the area's development from a predominantly residential neighborhood to the center of the Providence jewelry industry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Though late-nineteenth and early twentieth century brick and reinforced-concrete factories predominate in the district, there are also important examples of domestic and industrial architecture from the first half of the nineteenth century when the area was first developed as a part of Providence's West Side. The district also exhibits several early examples of the mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century steel-frame industrial buildings that were to become common in the post-World War II era.

One of the houses in the district, 137 Chestnut Street, is significant for its associations with two prominent members of a Providence family, Thomas A. Doyle and his sister, Sarah E., Doyle. Thomas A. Doyle was mayor of Providence for eighteen years between 1864 and 1886, during which time he oversaw the completion of numerous public works and the improvement of the city services. Sarah E. Doyle, as a teacher in the Providence High School and a leading advocate for the establishment of the coeducational Rhode Island School of Design and the Pembroke College for Women associated with Brown University, was one of the most effective spokesmen for women's education in Rhode Island and the nation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The factories erected by jewelry manufacturers and real estate investors illustrate broad trends in the development of the jewelry industry both in Rhode Island and in the United States as a whole. They are also significant representatives of major developments in 19th- and 20th-century industrial architecture in Rhode Island and the rest of the country. They demonstrate the evolution of architectural engineering techniques in the solution of basic industrial needs including fire prevention construction, improved lighting and the efficient use of space.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**SIGNIFICANCE**

The earliest factory in the district, the Elm Street Machine Shop, with its walls built of stone to reduce the dangers of fire, its large windows with flat lintels and the long continuous trapdoor monitors; in the gable roof, designed to provide as much light as possible to the work areas, and the minimal classical styling seen in the plain stone cornice and the round arches of the freight doors, is a well-preserved example of the industrial architecture that emerged in the first half of the nineteenth century. The late 19th-century jewelry factories that followed are quite different. Built in a downtown location where real estate had become very expensive, they are taller than earlier buildings, some of them reaching seven stories high, and they use all of the available space in their often irregular lots. They are built with brick load-bearing walls and slow-burning heavy timber frames. In an effort to increase window space and improve natural lighting, their builders almost universally employed the segmental arch in the window openings, which concentrated more of the wall load in the piers between the windows, thereby allowing for larger windows. A further development in this trend was the creation of thicker piers which supported the wall, while the non-load bearing spandrels between the piers contained even larger windows. The flat or near-flat roof, which allowed for maximum use and improved lighting of the top story, had also become common following the introduction of coal tar and tarpaper coatings. Stylistically, most of these turn-of-the-century buildings are similar and quite plain, with a corbeled cornice providing the major ornamental touch, as in the Champlin Building and the Doran Building. Occasionally the main entrance is the focus of more elaborate decoration, e.g. the Irons and Russell Building. In the second decade of the 20th century, the development of flat-slab reinforced-concrete construction transformed the nature of industrial building. In this type of construction, the concrete floor slab and the

columns, reinforced by steel rods, became the only structural elements in a building, opening up the interior space and leaving eighty percent of the walls free for windows. First introduced in Rhode Island in the A.T. Wall Building of 1910, flat-slab reinforced-concrete construction was employed in the major factories built in the jewelry district after that year, including the Doran-Speidel Building, the Little Nemo Building and the Coro Building.

In the immediate post-WW2 period, a new type of industrial building made its appearance in the Jewelry District. Although the first steel frame industrial buildings for specialized uses had been built in the Providence area in the 1890s, the standard form of steel frame building with brick veneer and long, horizontal bands of metal windows did not establish itself until mid-century.<sup>i</sup> The Jewelry Manufacturing Building (1947, architect unknown) and the Claverick Building (1948, Samuel Lerner, architect) are good examples of this type.

Departing from the mushroom column, flat slab construction of sizable industrial buildings erected in the district from 1910 through the 1920s, Brian Supply (111 Chestnut Street, 1954), employed joist-slab concrete construction, a post-WW2 innovation in industrial building practice that applied early 20<sup>th</sup>-century concrete T-beam technology (often used in bridges) to use in concrete floor slabs. This technology represented a step in the evolution of 20<sup>th</sup> century concrete construction. Beginning with mushroom columns supporting concrete slabs, progressing to concrete column and spandrel construction, and then evolving to joist-slab construction where the joists and slab were part of a continuous pour, each technology representing an improvement in efficiency and cost.

The jewelry industry in Providence had its origins in the late eighteenth century in the enterprises of two men, Seril Dodge, who was the first jeweler to open a shop in Providence, and his nephew, Nehemiah Dodge, who developed an early process for rolled plated gold. From these small beginnings Providence developed into the center of jewelry manufacturing in the United States in the late nineteenth century, a position which it has continued to hold.

The elder Dodge was in business in Providence by August, 1784, manufacturing watches, clocks and gold and silver jewelry. Dodge prospered, sharing in the town's success as a center of maritime trade, and he was soon sharing the local market with several other jewelers. In 1794, just about the time that Seril Dodge retired, Nehemiah Dodge opened his own shop for the manufacture of 18k gold jewelry. Before long, he abandoned this traditional craft and became the first manufacturer of rolled plated gold. The method which he developed, perhaps with techniques learned from his uncle, consisted of uniting a thin sheet of gold to a thicker sheet of copper with silver solder, and then hammering it and rolling it to the desired thickness. Dodge sold his plated gold to other goldsmiths and thus became the first "manufacturing jeweler." As such, he instituted two trends that would continue to characterize the Providence jewelry industry: the production of jewelry in the lower price ranges; and the specialization and innovation in the technology of jewelry manufacture.

On the foundations laid by the Dodges and their contemporaries, the Providence jewelry industry grew steadily if not rapidly in the early nineteenth century. One of the aspects of this growth was an expansion of the jewelers' markets. Not content with just local sales, Providence jewelers were soon traveling throughout the country, vending their gold chains and other wares as far away as New Orleans. Though the markets expanded, the average jewelry operation did not. The most common arrangement was the small partnership of two or more members, with one partner managing the shop and the other keeping the books and marketing the product. Within the shop, the traditional institution of apprenticeship prevailed. After serving their seven-year apprenticeships, two or more journeymen often combined their resources to form a new partnership. These partnerships were not heavily capitalized nor did they last more than ten years on the average. This was due largely to the volatile nature of the jewelry business. The sales of jewelry, a luxury item, have been particularly sensitive to downturns in the economy, which occurred regularly in the nineteenth century. Apart from the mood of the general economy, the jeweler also has had to deal with fluctuations in the prices of precious metals as well as changing tastes in fashion. At the same time, jewelry production in this era was mostly done by hand and it required little investment in machinery or other capital goods. These factors all combined to create an industry populated by a variety of small firms. A major exception to these conditions was the silverware industry as typified by the Gorham

<sup>i</sup> In his 1939 study, *Rhode Island Architecture*, Henry Russell Hitchcock discussed several modern Rhode Island industrial-type structures of note, among them the reinforced concrete grandstand of Narragansett Race Track (Pawtucket/East Providence, 1934), the GE Base Plant (Providence), and the American Brass Company Warehouse (200 Clifford Street, Providence, 1937). This latter building survives in altered form (with a post-1960 north addition) just outside of the boundaries of the Jewelry District. Hitchcock was struck by the building's crisp modernity, exemplified by the white enameled brick skin and horizontal ribbon of industrial steel sash windows. "The American Brass Company Warehouse in Providence, built by Peter Geddes in 1937, is not a factory in the ordinary sense, but it displays an elegant and quite conscious vocabulary of modern industrial design." P. 69. Unfortunately, in its later use as Excell Manufacturing Company, the building's windows were partially bricked in, presenting the sequence of vertical window openings visible today.

Document page number   13  

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Manufacturing Company. Founded by Jabez Gorham, who served his apprenticeship under Nehemiah Dodge, the Gorham Company expanded early in its history, adopting steam-powered factory production in 1850 and incorporating in 1865. Despite their common origins, the jewelry and the silverware industries in Providence developed along quite different lines.

In 1830 there were twenty-seven jewelry firms employing 280 workers in Providence; by 1850, there were fifty-seven firms and 590 workers. The city's prominence as a jewelry center served to attract both native and foreign craftsmen. One of the most notable of the immigrants was Thomas Lowe of Birmingham, England, who brought with him a cheaper and more effective technique for making gold plate without using any solder.

The Panic of 1857, and the Civil War retarded the industry as a whole but the postwar economic boom stimulated unprecedented growth. From forty-five shops employing over 700 workers in 1865, the industry expanded to 130 companies with almost 2,700 workers by 1875. By 1880, Rhode Island was the leading state in the manufacture of jewelry, accounting for more than one quarter of the entire national, jewelry production. Of the state's 148 firms, 142 of them were in Providence. By 1890, Providence's numbers had grown to more than 200 firms with almost 7,000 workers. This extensive growth in the final quarter of the nineteenth century was the result of an expanding market for inexpensive jewelry, the growing labor force, fed by immigration, and the process of mechanization which began to transform the industry.

Certain important technological innovations in this period originated in Providence, such as Levi Burdon's invention of seamless-filled wire (c.1887) which stimulated the chain-making industry. Another technological advance, electroplating, was quickly taken up by Providence jewelers and applied to the manufacture of novelties, such as buttons, studs, emblems, badges and other metal ornaments. Mechanization also led to increasing specialization, with many firms contributing to the manufacture of a final product. One of the largest of these specialized industries was the production of jewelers' findings, the pin-stems, catches, hubs and dies and other hardware for pins, earrings, necklaces and novelties. Electroplating, coloring, engraving, chasing, refining, toolmaking and jewelry box and case-making were other areas where specialized firms emerged.

Within the individual firms, the craft traditions, while not disappearing completely, were being supplanted by specialization as well. Workers increasingly performed a single type of job, such as soldering, operating a press, polishing or stone-setting. There was in addition a large amount of low-skill work, such as stringing beads and assembling jewelry that was done by semi or unskilled workers at home. These workers, many of them immigrant women and children often labored for low wages in unsafe working conditions. This type of work has been largely but not completely eliminated.

A major manifestation of the jewelry industry's expansion in the second half of the nineteenth century was the growth of a jewelry district. Prior to 1850 most of the jewelry shops had been on or near North Main Street. By the end of the Civil War, they had moved across the river to the West Side, where they concentrated in the area bounded by Richmond, Orange, Middle and Clifford Streets, south of the city's banking and commercial district. Here there began to appear the first multi-story factory buildings built by jewelers and real estate investors for multiple tenancies by the industry. One of the first was the Richardson and Flicks or the Bowen Building (1850) at Page and Friendship Streets. It was the largest jewelry building in the city until the Fitzgerald Building was erected on Eddy Street between Friendship and Clifford Streets in the early 1870s. As the industry's growth accelerated in the 1880s, jewelry manufacturers began to look outside the immediate boundaries of the jewelry district for new building sites and it was at this juncture that the district began to spread south and west down Eddy and Chestnut Streets and along the side streets between them.

This area to the south of Friendship Street was largely residential, except for the industrial corridor along Eddy Street and the riverfront. Development had begun here in the late eighteenth century when the Eddy family and others established shipyards and wharves on Cowpen Point at the end of Ship Street (the present Ship and Eddy Streets). More intensive building followed in the early nineteenth century as a part of the general growth of Providence's West Side. Anthony's Map of Providence of 1823 shows that the present street pattern was largely in place by that date, and by the 1840s, this development was essentially complete. The neighborhood was home to a range of Providence society, from merchants and businessmen who worked in the business district to the north, to factory managers, artisans and skilled mechanics who were employed in neighboring factories or in the shipyards and on the wharves to the east. For example, the house at 137 Chestnut Street was built and initially occupied by Samuel Lewis, a mason. In 1844 it became the residence of Thomas A. Doyle and his family. Doyle (1827-1886), was an auctioneer and stock and real estate broker who entered politics as a member of the Common Council in 1852 and almost continuously thereafter held office in the Providence city government. After filling several different posts in the city government, he was elected mayor of Providence in 1864, a post which he held for eighteen years, serving from 1864-1869, 1870-1881, and from 1884 until his death in 1886. During his administrations, Providence more than doubled in size and wealth and the scope of city services expanded as well.

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The improvements included the establishment of regular drills and uniforms for the city police, the introduction of both a city water system and a sewage system and the creation of a city park and several other public buildings, including the present City Hall. Doyle had moved to a new residence in 1870, but his sisters, Charlotte and Sarah E. Doyle, continued to live here until 1892.

Sarah Doyle (1830-1922) was herself a figure on considerable stature as a suffragist and a proponent of women's education. She began her career as a teacher in the girls' department of Providence High School in 1856. From 1878 until she retired in 1892, she served as the principal of the girls' department. She was also a tireless volunteer on behalf of higher education for women and served as one of the leaders in the founding of the coeducational Rhode Island School of Design in 1877. At the request of the president of Brown University, she founded and chaired the Rhode Island Society for the Collegiate Education of Women, the organization that raised the funds for the establishment and construction of the Pembroke College for Women at Brown University in 1892. In 1893 she became one of the first recipients of an honorary A.M. from Pembroke College. She continued to exert a strong formative influence on Rhode Island society until her death in 1922.

Neighboring houses to the Doyle residence which are now gone included: 155 Chestnut Street, originally the residence of Pardon Clarke, a painter, and for many years the home of Benjamin White, cashier of the Phenix Bank; and 18 Bassett Street, a more modest rental house that was probably the home of a mechanic or skilled worker.

Two major exceptions to the predominantly residential land use in the area west of Eddy Street were the machine shop on Elm Street at Butler (Imperial Place), built by the Phenix Iron Foundry and Elm Street Machine Shop at Eddy and Elm Streets; and the Elba Mill on Butler Street between Elm and Bassett Streets, one of the few textile factories in that part of the city.

This community had developed as a part of the walking city, but by the late nineteenth century, the development of streetcar lines had made it possible to live a greater distance from the workplace. As new residential neighborhoods were developed to the south and west of the central part of the city, industry's claims on this area were growing more imperative. One of the last residential buildings erected in the neighborhood was at 29 Elbow Street. Built c. 1888 on a lot created by subdividing the 155 Chestnut Street parcel, 29 Elbow Street was a lodging house, with tenants who included, significantly, jewelers.

The first major-landmark in the jewelry industry's expansion south of Friendship Street was the Champlin Building, erected in 1888 at the corner of Chestnut and Ship Streets. The S.B. Champlin Company had been founded in 1872 by Stanton B. Champlin and his son George to manufacture gold rings and gold-filled chains. Having outgrown its quarters at Eddy and Elm-Streets, the Champlin Company built a five-story brick building large enough to house its own operations and to provide rental space for other manufacturers. The venture was such a success that the building was enlarged on the south in 1901. Among the other companies that occupied the building were: the E.M. Dart Company, manufacturers of pipe fittings and pumps, valves and regulators; the Edwin Lowe Company, successors to the plating business started by Thomas Lowe; and the Hedison Company.

The next to follow the Champlin Company's lead was not a jewelry firm, but a textile company. The Vesta Knitting Mills built a six-story brick factory on the site of the Elba Mill in 1893 and rented a small amount of space to jewelry manufacturers. The demand for manufacturing space was so great that the company built a second large factory in 1903 and rented out five of the six floors to jewelers. Both buildings were eventually acquired by the Imperial Knife Company, founded by Felix Mirando, which was the first large American manufacturer of jack knives.

In 1903-04, the Irons and Russell Company, manufacturers of emblems, pins and charms, commissioned a new-building to provide it with expanded quarters and to house other light industrial firms. Located on the corner of Chestnut and Clifford Streets, the six-story brick building was noted at the time of its construction for its use of electrical power, provided by its own plant, which eliminated much of the need for belting and shafting, making the workplace lighter and cleaner. The building was heated by the exhaust steam from the power generating system, and water was supplied throughout the building from a spring discovered during the excavation of the foundations. Irons and Russell was one of a few Providence firms that succeeded in expanding beyond the customarily small scale of operations. By 1909, when the average number of workers in a jewelry company was thirty-two, Irons and Russell employed 170 people. The company continued to occupy the building until 1956.

The concentration of these multistory factories on Chestnut Street increased in 1907 when James Doran and Sons built the seven-story brick Doran Building at 150 Chestnut Street. The Dorans, who manufactured findings, occupied only one floor in their building and rented out the remainder.

A similar pattern of development but a different type of building technology produced the A.T. Wall Building at 162 Clifford Street in 1910. Ashbel T. Wall founded his company in 1888 for the production of gold-plated wire. In 1901, the company employed sixty workers, and by 1908, it had outgrown its rented quarters and had commissioned the Bowerman Brothers of Boston to design a new factory. The result, built by the Thomas F. Cullinan Company of Providence, was the first example in Rhode Island of mushroom-column, flat slab reinforced concrete construction. The mushroom-column system of flat-slab construction, developed by C.A.P. Turner in 1905-06, was one of the earliest successful flat-slab structural systems. The A.T. Wall Company occupied part of the building and rented the rest. One of the first tenants was the Clark and Coombs Manufacturing Company, established 1862, makers of gold rings.

The mushroom-column, flat-slab system was used again two years later when James Doran and Sons erected a second factory building purely devoted to jewelry manufacturing rental units. This five-story building at 70 Ship Street became known as the Doran-Speidel Building.

In contrast to these large multiple-unit factories, the Manufacturers' Refining Company building, erected at 26 Ship Street in 1910, was a small two-story brick building, devoted entirely to that company's business, which was the refining of the precious metals contained in the floor sweeping collected from the neighboring jewelry workshops.

With the completion of the second Doran building in 1912, the building boom south of Friendship Street slowed down for a time. However, the jewelry industry continued to expand and diversify while Providence's other major industries, textiles and base metals, faltered. Because of the relative simplicity of machinery in the jewelry industry and the typical small capital investment in and personal ownership of jewelry companies, many new experimental companies continued to form. Though not all were successful, many made significant contributions in new products, processing and machinery.

Many products manufactured in the early twentieth century, particularly after World War 1, represented an imaginative entrepreneurial response by jewelry manufacturers to changing social customs and tastes. One such product was the cigarette lighter, which became popular with the increasing number of men and women smokers. Another was the wristwatch, which became a fashionable item after its widespread use by the armed forces in World War I. The Speidel Manufacturing Company, one of the first companies to manufacture the metal watchband, traced its origins to Albert Speidel, a German immigrant, who began as a manufacturer of gold watch chains at 70 Ship Street before World War I. His brother Edwin designed an expandable metal watch bracelet in 1930 and went on to found the Speidel Corporation, which eventually acquired ownership of the building at 70 Ship Street.

New building in the southern end of the jewelry district in the 1920s included a number of moderately-sized, steel-framed, factories, as well as some of the largest buildings yet erected by the industry. There was an increasing tendency to locate the new factories south of the existing concentration at Chestnut and Clifford Streets. The smaller buildings, which appeared for the most part on the cross streets like Ship, Elm and South Streets. Among these smaller buildings were two built by manufacturers: the office and factory building of the W.H. Coe Company, manufacturers of goldleaf, at 89 Ship Street, and the N.H. Haronian Building at 60 Ship Street, built by Nazareth Haronian both to house his own small jewelry and novelty company and for rental use. An example of a similarly sized factory built solely as an investment is the Alfred Company Building at 100 South Street, which housed tenants including the William C. Greene Company, a Providence jewelry firm that dated back to 1849.

The two firms that built large factory buildings in the 1920s exemplified the general trend in the Providence jewelry industry toward high volume production of increasingly inexpensive jewelry.

The Little Nemo Manufacturing Company, founded in 1913 by Benjamin Brier, Charles Brier and Samuel Magid, specialized in imitation diamond jewelry, using stones imported from around the world that were cut, polished, and in some cases set by machinery. In 1928, the company moved from rented quarters at 70 Ship Street, to their new factory at 222 Richmond Street, where they remained for half a century.

The Coro Company, which started as the Cohen and Rosenburger jewelry firm in New York City, opened a Providence branch in 1911. In 1929, they moved into a new factory at 167 Point Street, built in the same flat-slab, reinforced concrete style of construction as the Little Nemo Building, which provided them with the largest factory in the jewelry business in Providence. Although the onset of the Great Depression made this expansion appear ill-timed, the Coro Company survived by becoming the leading manufacturer in the field of costume jewelry in the United States.

Paradoxically, the Depression of the 1930s stimulated the Providence jewelry industry, as precious jewelry craftsmen

Document page number  16 

applied their skills to the design of cheaper, mass-produced jewelry. By introducing a quality approach, they raised the production standards of costume jewelry and stimulated its consumption. Coro had been one of the first firms to experiment in costume jewelry, and with its new plant, it was the best equipped to respond to the new demand. It consolidated its early lead and went on to become the biggest manufacturer of costume jewelry, on into the 1960s. The Little Nemo Company enjoyed similar success as a "syndicate plant," manufacturing costume jewelry for chain stores such as Woolworths.

The concentration of jewelry-related businesses in the district created a business opportunity for supply houses. Zaruck Berberian, who worked as an enameler in the late 'teens, established Z. Berberian Company, a supplier for the jewelry trade, in 1922. The company was located at two different addresses on Chestnut Street (now demolished) until Joseph A. Brian, Berberian's general supervisor, purchased the company in 1955 and renamed it Brian Supply. In the same year, Brian began the construction of the building at 111 Chestnut to house an expanded supply house. This reinforced concrete frame building utilized joist-slab construction, a technique in which the slab floors are poured integrally with the joists. Brian Supply occupied the now-vacant building until ca 2000. Rayhill and Green, another district supply house, occupied the narrow east wing of the Champlin Building (now 90 Ship St.) for a period of time in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

Before the success of the costume jewelry industry was apparent, the Depression had effectively put an end to new building in the jewelry district until after World War II. Manufacturing had clearly become the dominant activity in the area though, and many of the existing houses were adapted for use by small jewelry firms. Perhaps the greatest losses to the old residential neighborhood came with urban renewal and the interstate highway program in the late 1950s and 1960s. Complete blocks of houses were razed to create parking lots, while the older industrial area to the north, the original jewelry district, largely disappeared with the construction of Route 195 and the subsequent completion of a court complex on Friendship Street. In the 1970s and 80s, the jewelry industry concentrated most of its new building in Providence farther south along Eddy Street, as well as in the industrial parks in the surrounding suburbs. Costume jewelry continues to be the mainstay of the Providence jewelry industry though the industry has contracted significantly since the 1970s. At this juncture the industry's presence in the district is confined to two small-scale manufacturing or merchandising companies at the Claverick Building (161 Clifford St.) and the Roberts Paper Company Buildings (41-43 Bassett St.).

Within the remaining portion of the jewelry district today, as jewelry manufacturing and its associated industries have all but disappeared, most of the factory buildings have been adapted for reuse as office space and commercial, medical and residential condominiums.

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**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

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Document page number   17  

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

Document page number 18

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 19.3 acres  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>19</u> Zone	<u>299960</u> Easting	<u>4632330</u> Northing	3	<u>19</u> Zone	<u>299650</u> Easting	<u>4631820</u> Northing
2	<u>19</u> Zone	<u>299960</u> Easting	<u>4631880</u> Northing	4	<u>19</u> Zone	<u>299480</u> Easting	<u>4632220</u> Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The boundaries of the Providence Jewelry Manufacturing Historic District are contiguous with Plat 20, Lot 352; Plat 21: Lots 14, 21, 29, 52, 82, 83, 84, 86, 99, 105, 106, 124, 132, 146, 187, 202, 244, 261, 385, 412, 418, 419, 420, 422, 428 and 433; Plat 22, Lots 54 and 426; Plat 24, Lot 537.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the Providence Jewelry Manufacturing Historic District have been drawn to encompass the major historic jewelry factories in the vicinity, other industrial buildings historically associated with the growth of the jewelry industry in the vicinity and the few reasonably well-preserved early to mid-nineteenth century houses that are in close proximity to the major factories and that suggest the mixed-use neighborhood that existed here during the period of significance. In this revision to the 1985 nomination, the boundaries have been drawn to include buildings that contribute to the district within the extended period of significance. At the same time these boundaries have been drawn to exclude as much as possible non-contributing or intrusive modern buildings.

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Original form: Richard Greenwood (1985). Amendment: Edward Connors (2011)

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date April 2011

street & number 39 Dyer Avenue telephone 401 595-0699

city or town Riverside state RI zip code 02806

e-mail nconnors@cox.net

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**

Providence Jewelry Manufacturing Historic District (Boundary Increase)  
Property Name

Providence  
City/Town

Providence Co., R. I.  
County, State

Document page number   19  

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

**Name of Property:** Providence Jewelry Manufacturing Historic District (Boundary Increase, 2011)

**City or Vicinity:** Providence

**County:** Providence

**State:** Rhode Island

**Photographer:** Edward Connors

**Date Photographed:** January 2012

Number 1 of 8: Jonette Jewelry Building, 100 South Street, view west

Number 2 of 8: Jewelry Manufacturing Building, 33 Bassett Street, view north

Number 3 of 8: Claverick Building, 161 Clifford Street, view north

Number 4 of 8: View northeast down Clifford Street. Claverick Building (161 Clifford Street) on left, A.T. Wall Building (162 Clifford Street) on right

Number 5 of 8: Roberts Paper Company, 41-3 Bassett Street, view west

Number 6 of 8: Galkin Building, 161 Chestnut Street, view southwest

Number 7 of 8: Galkin Building, 161 Chestnut Street, view southeast

Number 8 of 8: Providence Wholesale Drug Warehouse, 171 Chestnut Street, view northwest

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**Property Owner:**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name \_\_\_\_\_

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

**BIKES**



THE HUB

**147**  
South St

NO PARKING  
EXCEPT BY  
PERMITS ONLY



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**SPACE** 401-751-3200

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PARKING



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PARKING  
HERE



CALVIN COOK ART



Art Bar

