



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
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MINUTES

RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION April 11, 2012

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Robert Goff
Mr. John Grosvenor, AIA
Mr. Michael Hebert, NR Review Board
Mr. Karst Hoogeboom, Chairman
Dr. Patrick Malone
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon
Dr. Ronald Onorato
Mr. Pieter N. Roos
Edward F. Sanderson, State Historic Preservation Officer & Executive Director

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Sharon Allison, Sr. Grants Coordinator
Dr. Richard Greenwood, Deputy Director
Ms. Virginia Hesse, Principal Historical Architect
Ms. Mercedes Monteiro, National Register Assistant - Heritage Aide

GUESTS

Mr. Clark Schoettle, Providence Revolving Fund
Mr. Edward Connors, National Register Consultant
Ms. Virginia Branch, AIA, Durkee, Brown, Viveiros & Werenfels
Mr. Edward Carapezza, Potter Hill Mill

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Janet Coit, Director DEM
Mr. Robert E. Cusack
John P. Leyden, State Building Commissioner
Dr. Patricia Rubertone
Mr. Keith Stokes, Executive Director, EDC
1 Vacant

II. AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was convened at 9:35 A.M. by Mr. Hoogeboom, Chairman.

2. Minutes of February 8, 2012

On a motion by Mr. Goff, seconded by Dr. Onorato, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the Minutes of February 8, 2012.

3. Executive Director's Report

a) Dr. Timothy Ives has been selected to fill the vacant position of Principal Archaeologist. Dr. Ives will be introduced at the May Commission meeting.

b) Governor Chafee has appointed Mr. Sanderson to chair the RI 1663 Colonial Charter Commission. The Commission is directed to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the Charter's issue, recommend measures for the conservation and presentation of the Charter document, draft a statement of the Charter's historical significance, and organize educational programs and celebratory events during the anniversary year of 2013.

c) Robert O. Jones has retired after 30 years of working at RIHPHC as an architectural historian due to poor health.

d) The 27th annual statewide historic preservation conference will be held on Saturday, April 21, 2012 in Woonsocket. Commissioners are encouraged to attend if possible.

4. National Register of Historic Places

Final presentation: Heaton & Cowing Mill, 1115 Douglas Avenue. Providence

Dr. Greenwood presented information about the Heaton & Cowing Mill. The Heaton & Cowing Mill is a small, two-story, mid-19th century, rubblestone mill with an early 20th century brick addition that occupies a riverside location at the edge of a larger industrial complex on the east side of Douglas Pike at the Providence-North Providence boundary. The site, bounded by Douglas Pike (1807) on the west and the West River on the south, was rural when the mill was built in 1832, but assumed its present mixed-use urban character with Providence's expansive growth in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While the mill was modified incrementally during its active period of industrial use, it still conveys the distinct character of a small mid-19th century factory with its small scale and form, rough-textured masonry and its site on the north bank of the river.

The Heaton & Cowing Mill is significant as a representative example of the small-scale, early- to mid-19th-century textile factories that were built to utilize the water power of Rhode Island's smaller rivers and streams. Mills of this type were an integral part of early industrialization in the region, when manufacturers' reliance on water power led them to develop mill sites on minor watercourses, not just those on major rivers that could support large factories. For Heaton & Cowing, manufacturers of boot laces, this small factory provided an entrée into the larger economy; others like it accommodated niche services and often served as incubators of innovation. With the widespread adoption of steam power in the second half of the 19th century, these small-scale mills were often abandoned or replaced with large complexes relying on steam as well as water power, leaving the Heaton & Cowing Mill as a rare survivor of the type.

Mr. Schoettle and Mr. Connors, representing the owner, spoke in support of the nomination and briefly described the planned project to rehabilitate the mill for housing.

Following discussion, on a motion by Dr. Onorato, seconded by Mr. Grosvenor, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the National Register nomination.

Preliminary presentation: Glenark Mill, Dyehouse Building, 64 East St., Woonsocket.

Dr. Greenwood presented information about Glenark Mill, Dyehouse Building. Glenark Mill Dyehouse is a largely 1-story trapezoidal brick factory building built as a subsidiary building to the main Glenark Mill, which it faces across a narrow courtyard. Originally one story tall, it was raised in the early 20th century, with some sections reaching four stories in height. The building's present height reflects the results of a fire in 1987 that affected both buildings, but most severely damaged the upper portions of the Dyehouse. In 1988 the damaged upper stories were removed, and the remaining portion was rehabilitated, keeping the exterior masonry walls and exposed timber mill framing, while adding new doors and window sash.

The Glenark Mill was listed on the National Register in 1988 for its significance in the industrial development of Woonoscket. Due to the damaged condition of the Dyehouse, it was not included in the nomination. However, subsequent to the listing, the building was rehabilitated as a one-story building, preserving the historic pattern of development that was established by the initial construction of the 1-story dyehouse complex in the 1890s.

At the present time, the Owner is seeking to have the Dyehouse building determined to be a contributing feature of the Glenark Mill complex and included within its NR boundaries. The owner is planning a historic rehabilitation project for the property.

During discussion, Mr. Hoogeboom noted that the building in its present form preserves historic fabric, and in its largely one-story configuration it repeats the single-story dyehouse form of c. 1890. Mr. Grosvenor noted how the narrow courtyard formed by this building on the west of the main mill was critical to the historic sense of place. Finally, Dr. Malone cited the historic

function of the dyehouse as an important aspect of the mill's industrial significance, and he stated that its irregular footprint conforms to the confined riverside location and is an important aspect of the mill's historic form.

On a motion by Dr. Malone, seconded by Dr. Onorato, the Commission unanimously

VOTED preliminary approval to amend the Glenark Mill National Register nomination to include the Dyehouse as a contributing resource.

Preliminary presentation: Potter Hill Mill, Westerly

Dr. Greenwood presented information about Potter Hill Mill.

In 1810, Joseph Potter began manufacturing-cotton cloth at the Potter Hill site. It was the first cotton cloth produced in Westerly. In 1840, an impressive red granite mill was constructed. This 3-story, Greek Revival structure has a gable roof, pedimented end-gables, a central tower, and smooth-faced granite sills. The masonry is worked in alternating smooth-ashlar courses and narrower quarry-faced courses. The building was last used for carding, spinning, and warping. Prior to a major fire in 1977, Potter Hill Mill was one of the finest remaining textile mills in Rhode Island for its impressive architecture, surviving weave shed, dye house and boiler house, and virtually intact machinery.

Sadly the mill was never repaired following the 1977 fire. Today the granite shell survives with a collapsed roof, and the third story masonry has collapsed on the entire river side although the masonry is more intact on the front (inland) side. The weave shed, boiler house, and dyehouse are in ruins.

Dr. Onorato stated that the Greek Revival architectural character of the granite mill remains very evident. Dr. Malone noted that Potter Hill was (and is) a superb example of granite mill construction, and he added that the mill is significant for its association with the production of so-called "Negro Cloth." Mr. Sanderson observed that National Register criteria require that a building retain structural integrity, and he recommended that further information would be needed for a final National Register nomination. Dr. Malone thought Potter Hill Mill had value as a historic archaeological site as well as a standing structure.

On a motion by Dr. Malone, seconded by Dr. Onorato, the Commission

VOTED preliminary approval to nominate Potter Hill Mill to the National Register, subject to further information regarding the mill's structural integrity. Mr. Grosvenor did not participate in the discussion and did not vote.

5. Loan Program Report

Mr. Goff and Ms. Allison distributed a summary report on current loan projects. Four loans are current. Two loans have passed their original five-year term, but they continue to pay quarterly interest. The Loan Committee is talking with the borrowers about the need to re-pay the principal amounts and bring the loans to conclusion. The Loan Committee intends to make periodic reports on the status of loan projects.

6. Other business

There was no other business.

7. Next meeting date: Wednesday May 9, 2012.

8. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:25 A.M.

Minutes recorded by,



Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director