



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS
HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
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MINUTES
RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION
July 10, 2013

I. MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Michael Abbott, AIA
Ms. Morgan Devlin
Mr. Mohamad Farzan, AIA
Mr. Karst Hoogeboom, Chairman
Dr. Patrick Malone
Dr. Ronald Onorato
Mr. Jared L. Rhodes, Chief of Statewide Planning representing Kevin Flynn, Asso. Dir
Mr. Edward F. Sanderson, State Historic Preservation Officer
Mr. Clark Schoettle

STAFF PRESENT

Ms. Joanna Doherty, Senior Architectural Historian
Dr. Richard Greenwood, Deputy Director
Ms. Virginia Hesse, Principal Historical Architect
Ms. Michaela Jergensen, RIDOT Reviewer
Ms. Roberta Randall, Principal Historical Architect
Ms. Sarah Zurier, Sr. Special Projects Coordinator

MEMBERS ABSENT

Ms. Janet Coit, Director DEM
Dr. Omur Harmansah
Mr. Michael Hebert, NR Review Board
John P. Leyden, State Building Commissioner
Dr. E. Pierre Morenon
Mr. Pieter N. Roos
Mr. Marcel Valois, Executive Director EDC

INVITED GUEST

Mr. Jonathan Stevens, Office of Governor Chafee

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE Representing the PSNC

Ms. Monty Burnham
Ms. Trudy Coxe, Executive Director
Mr. John Grove
Mr. Terry Dickinson
Mr. Curt Genga
Mr. Alan Joslin, AIA

Mr. David Leys
Mr. Matthew Leys
Mr. Doug Reed
Mr. John Rodman
Ms. Kaity Ryan

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Mr. James Moore, Bellevue – Ochre Point Neighborhood Association
Mr. Turner Scott, Esq. representing Ochre Point Neighborhood Association
Ms. Gladys Szapary

II. AGENDA

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:35 A.M., Karst Hooageboom, Chairman, presiding.

2. Minutes of June 12, 2013

Mr. Sanderson noted that draft Minutes for the June 12, 2013 meeting were circulated to Commissioners, representatives of the Preservation Society of Newport County (PSNC), and representations of the Ochre Point Neighborhood Association, and all parties were invited to provide suggested corrections or edits to the draft Minutes; parties were not invited to offer new or additional information that was not presented on June 10. Mr. Scott, an attorney representing the Ochre Point Neighborhood Association submitted suggested revisions to the reported comments by Mr. Moore, which Mr. Sanderson incorporated into the revised Minutes. Mr. Scott also provided suggested revisions to the reported comments by Ms. Patricia O'Donnell, a historical landscape expert and consultant to the Ochre Point Neighborhood Association. Subsequently Ms. O'Donnell submitted her own notes on her June 10 comments. Mr. Sanderson revised the reported comments by Ms. O'Donnell based on her own notes. The revised Minutes of June 12, 2013 were distributed in advance of the July 10 meeting.

Mr. Scott questioned whether the Minutes showed that a Cultural Landscape Report would be required to be submitted and accepted prior RIHPHC approval of the Welcome Center project. Mr. Hooageboom replied that the June 12, 2013 vote recommended a CLR for the entire Breakers property and that the PSNC has stated on the record that they are in the process of preparing a CLR for the entire property so in his opinion the issue is moot.

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

VOTED to approve the Minutes of June 12, 2013.

3. Executive Director's Report

a) Mr. Sanderson reported that he submitted a grant application to the National Park Service for \$3.2 million in federal Hurricane Sandy Disaster Relief Grants for Historic Properties. The program guidelines and procedures are expected to be similar to the RI State Preservation Grants administered by RIHPHC in 2002 – 2007. The program was announced in The Providence Journal, June 1, 2013, and information has been distributed by email and posted on the RIHPHC website. RIHPHC has published preliminary information about the program and invited potential applicants to submit summary information about potential projects by August 1, 2013. To date, relatively few projects have been identified that involve Hurricane Sandy damage to historic buildings. However, Hurricane Sandy storm erosion affected archaeological resources on Block Island and the southern shore, and RIHPHC staff are preparing an initiative to survey and document Hurricane Sandy damage to archaeological properties. Commission staff will develop final grant program guidelines and procedures in consultation with the National Park Service and will present draft guidelines and procedures for Commission review and approval at the September meeting.

b) The RI Historic Preservation Tax Credits 2013 Program was enacted by the General Assembly as part of the State Budget, and Governor Chafee signed the law on July 3, 2013. Mr. Sanderson distributed a preliminary draft of a revised Part 2 application form and highlighted several changes from the 2008 state tax credit program. The 2013 program will allocate \$34.5 million in abandoned tax credits surrendered by projects that have withdrawn from the 2008 program.

c) The 1663 Colonial Charter Commission has moved the Charter into a new exhibit space at the State House, together with several other historical documents, including Roger Williams' deed to Providence land and William Coddington's founding of Newport. In addition, the Colonial Charter Commission sponsored 350th anniversary commemorative events on June 22.

d) The family trust that owns and manages Hopkins Hollow in Coventry has declined to receive a 2013 Rhody Stewardship Award due to privacy concerns. However, they will be pleased to accept a project award for rehabilitation of the historic cranberry processing barn.

4. Easement Review: The Breakers Welcome Center

Commissioner Mohamad Farzan has recused from participation in review of The Breakers Welcome Center, and he did not participate in this review.

Mr. Sanderson reported that he and RIHPHC Deputy Director Richard Greenwood and Principal Architects Virginia Hesse and Roberta Randall met with representatives of the PSNC Welcome Center projects on July 1, 2013 to address the issues listed in the RIHPHC June 12 resolution as requiring additional information or further review. Attendance at the meeting

included: Alan Joslin, architect; John Grove, Landscape architect; Carl Rothbart, WASA architect; Trudy Coxe, Terry Dickinson, Curt Genga, Kaity Ryan: PSNC. Mr. Sanderson also noted that ex. officio Commissioner Marcel Valois, Director of the RI Economic Development Corporation, submitted a letter to today's Commission meeting and copies of the letter were distributed.

Dr. Greenwood presented additional information about the Welcome Center design.

Boiler House: WASA is preparing analysis, scope of work, and construction plans for rehab at a future date. The work will be performed in-house by PSNC.

Design of the screen wall and handicap ramp at the Gate House: There is a functional need to separate the public from PSNC staff functions in this area. A revised design has eliminated the architectural column and curved wall previously proposed, and instead an open metal lattice covered in ivy will be installed in two sections, one at the rear porch of the Gate House and the other extending from the porch to the Welcome Center. Additional boxwood planting adjacent to the Gate House may be too massive and need further review.

Gate House Historic Rehab: WASA is preparing a scope-of-work for future PSNC in-house construction.

Gate House ADA ramp: This item is not included in the Welcome Center project. The current work will establish site grades not incompatible with future construction of an ADA ramp at the northeast rear door. However, since the Gate House interior is not ADA compliant, a ramp is only needed if the interior becomes accessible.

Siting and scale of the Welcome Center pavilions and their landscaping in relation to the Gate House: This issue was reviewed on site with the construction footprint marked with stakes in the ground and construction tape. Existing dense historic landscaping that will be preserved together with additional landscaping will effectively screen the southern face of the pavilion. In order to further protect the existing plant material and to respect the visual character of the Gate House, the southern pavilion of the Welcome Center has been shifted and rotated several feet back from the Gate House.

Construction details for disassembly and restoration of a portion of the Shepard Avenue perimeter wall and fence: WASA is preparing a work summary for disassembly and restoration. The work will be performed in-house by PSNC. The Indiana limestone capstone is cracked and damaged and will be replaced in-kind; other elements will be preserved and restored. PSNC will prepare "before" and "after" documentation. RIHPHC architects will conduct onsite review with Curt Genga.

Further detailed review of the proposed landscaping plan and plant materials: Revised plans show additional screening of the northern and southern pavilions, replacement/addition of

specimen trees, additional screening at the north lawn. The design along the Garden Path will provide more spatial definition and will restore the tiered hierarchy of the Path's landscape borders.

Landscape archaeology: The PSNC landscape architect and RIHPHC staff are working together to identify landscape archaeological consultants and to develop a reasonable scope of work to evaluate a portion of the affected Garden Path in order to document its historic treatment.

Other proposed landscape work not directly associated with the Welcome Center: The existing granite curbs at the western entrance drive where the Garden Path intersects on the north and south sides of the drive will be preserved; crushed stone crossings may be installed. No other crossing is planned.

Future removal of the existing non-historic ticket booth, etc. and repair of site will be reviewed separately.

Signage & lighting: No signage is currently planned. Lighting will be limited to lights installed in the roof soffits of the pavilions.

Specifications and samples for architectural and paving materials: Samples for granite pavers, chip seal for Path, patinated copper roof tiles, skylight glass, and paint colors have been reviewed and are acceptable; other samples will be reviewed as they become available.

Construction plans and specifications (including mechanical plans): Plans have been provided for RIHPHC staff review which is ongoing.

Cultural landscape report: PSNC landscape architect and historical consultant Judith Robinson is at work preparing the Cultural Landscape Report. The report will include a landscape master plan to inform and coordinate landscape improvements that are part of the Welcome Center project and future historic landscape preservation efforts. It also will include a plant materials succession plan to understand how the proposed landscape will develop and be maintained over time.

Following Dr. Greenwood's presentation, Dr. Onorato expressed satisfaction with the work to address the RIHPHC issues stated in the June 12 resolution. Mr. Schoettle asked for more detail regarding the Gate House screen wall and transition between the Gate House porch and the Welcome Center pavilion. He also noted that the landscape edge to the outdoor seating area has been improved but could be further developed.

Mr. Moore expressed continuing objection to the Welcome Center project design. He felt the scale of the project would compete with the Caretaker Cottage (Gate House) and that it would have an adverse impact on the historic landscape. He noted that the Vanderbilt estate had removed outbuildings such as stables and greenhouses off the property and had buried the boiler

house underground – using the Gate House as a “fake building” to conceal the boiler chimney. However, the Welcome Center project reintroduces outbuildings to the estate. He referred to comments in a letter from Darwina L. Neal (retired former Chief, Cultural Resource Preservation Services, National Capital Region, National Park Service) who offered the opinion that the Welcome Center could diminish the integrity of the property for future World Heritage consideration. Finally, Mr. Moore stated his opinion that the Welcome Center would severely limit the ability to recreate the 1896 gardens in the future.

Dr. Onorato noted that the June 12 resolution had expressed concern regarding “siting and scale of the pavilions and their landscaping in relation to the Gate House.” Dr. Greenwood explained his understanding that this referred to the relationship between the southern pavilion and the Gate House. Dr. Onorato recommended that ongoing technical review should take into account issues of scale. Ms. Devlin recalled that historian John Tschirch had concluded that the Welcome Center site was not a primary landscape feature. Mr. Hoogeboom asked a question about the possibility of moving the outdoor seating to the west into the area along Ochre Point Avenue? Mr. Joslin replied that would violate a City of Newport zoning setback, would create structural issues for the underground boiler house, and might affect the service functions, but that the details and landscape treatment of the outdoor seating area could continue to be studied. He noted that the food service area is already sized to a minimum capacity. Mr. Rhodes expressed concern with the overall scale of the Welcome Center; he did not object to the ticketing and restroom facilities, but he continued to question the food service function. Dr. Malone stated his belief based on experience at other historic properties that visitor services are very important; he felt the food service, outdoor seating area along with ticketing and restrooms all are appropriate. Mr. Hoogeboom said he was sympathetic to concerns about scale and design of the terrace, but he believes these are design details that can be resolved.

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

VOTED final approval of the Welcome Center project, subject to ongoing technical review by RIHPHC staff and Chairman Hoogeboom.

Mr. Schoettle voted no. Mr. Rhodes was recorded as not voting. Mr. Farzan had recused.

5. National Register of Historic Places

Final Approval: Block Island Multiple Property Documentation

Dr. Greenwood presented information about the nomination. The Historic and Architectural Resources of New Shoreham (Block Island) National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPF) is developed to provide an overarching and unifying thematic framework for the evaluation and registration of the historic and architectural resources of the island town of New Shoreham, Washington County, Rhode Island, commonly

known as Block Island. Two historic context statements provide a basis for assessing the significance of individual historic resources. The first, Developmental History of Block Island, 1660 – 1965, provides a broad overview of the community's history since colonization, setting out its key themes, events, and property types. The second, Domestic and Lodging Architecture of New Shoreham (Block Island), ca. 1700 – 1965, addresses the chronological development and varied character of the town's residential architecture. Although the second context statement is more narrowly focused, it encompasses the most common building types on the island, including single-family houses as well as the commercial realm of boarding houses, inns, and hotels, along with their related important landscapes. The document also describes the requirements for evaluating each of the various residential property types for nomination to National Register of Historic Places.

A primary purpose of the MPF is to facilitate the evaluation and nomination of significant historic properties to the National Register by providing documentation and resource analysis to support individual nominations. It is also envisioned that the information in the MPF will assist in preservation planning by public and private entities, so that Block Island's distinctive architectural and cultural landscape heritage receives the appreciation and the protection that it deserves.

This MPF should be regarded as a planning document that can be amended and expanded to assist in future preservation efforts. It is intended that additional associated historic contexts and associated property types can be incorporated into Historic and Architectural Resources of New Shoreham (Block Island) in the future to address new areas of research and evaluation.

Significance Summary

New Shoreham, which is coterminous with (and most commonly known as) Block Island, is a highly distinctive place with a more than 400-year history that is recorded in the island's well preserved cultural landscape, which consists of the natural environment overlain with buildings and land use imprints. As set forth in the historic context statements, the historical themes and significance of Block Island are rooted in the interrelationship of the ecological character with patterns of settlement, circulation, land clearing, agriculture and tourism economies, and other aspects of the community's historical development. Block Island's geographic and cultural isolation engage in dynamic interplay with state, regional, and national forces creating a layered legacy of physical features and historical associations. Block Island's primary significance themes presented in this MPF historic context lie in Exploration/Settlement, Community Planning and Development, Agriculture, Maritime History, Entertainment/Recreation, Conservation, and Architecture in the period between 1660 and 1965. The timeframe begins with the initial settlement of Block Island by English colonists about 1660 with the earliest surviving houses dating from ca. 1700. The termination date of 1965 marks the advent of subdivisions and the year roughly 50 years from the present. The predominant building types on the island are the houses, boardinghouses, inns, and hotels that have provided shelter for residents, whether they were year-round inhabitants, summer occupants, or transient visitors. These private dwellings and commercial lodgings with their associated outbuildings and

landscape settings merit recognition and preservation. The historic contexts of the Developmental History of Block Island, 1660 – 1965 and the Domestic and Lodging Architecture of Block Island, ca. 1700 – 1965 lay out the historical themes and events that define Block Island's past within the larger context of the state, region, and nation.

During discussion, it was noted that the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form does not itself nominate any specific properties, but the Form is used to facilitate future nomination of individual properties by assuring that the historical context and significance of certain types of properties has already been established. Dr. Onorato expressed interest in adding language to clarify how the Form can be used and expanded if appropriate. Dr. Malone expressed interest in adding a context for maritime history in the future.

After further discussion,

On a motion by Mr. Abbott, seconded by Mr. Farzan, the Commission unanimously

VOTED to approve the Block Island Multiple Property Documentation.

6. Other business

There was no other business.

7. Next regular meeting date: Wednesday August 14, 2013 at 9:30 AM.
(If the August meeting is cancelled, the next meeting would be Wednesday, September 11, 2013.)
8. Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 11:40 P.M.

Minutes recorded by,



Edward F. Sanderson, Executive Director