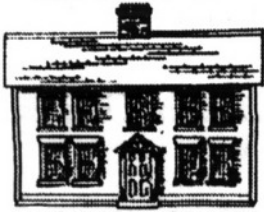


THE EAST PROVIDENCE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



John Hunt House

Gazette

Vol. XXIII No. 6

May 2011

President's letter

Nancy Moore, President



Hello Everyone,

May is Preservation Month and three members, Kris Rose, Dave Kelleher and I,

celebrated the start by attending the RI Preservation Conference on Block Island on April 30th. Block Island greeted us warmly and showed off its stately Victorian inns and hotels, and its conservation areas, lighthouses and historic houses. Dave was delighted with the lighthouse tour and Kris and I were amazed at the untouched interiors of some of the hotels. I also attended a presentation on preservation easements, similar to the one placed on the property at 410 North Broadway which has protected it well over the last twenty years.

This month, the national magazine "Preservation." highlighted an article on the National Register. It is so clearly and well written that we decided to print it for our members. I hope you will enjoy learning about this valuable protection for our historic properties. Perhaps

you will decide to apply for your own property.

This news flash just in: Susan and David Nichols report that their historic home on Willett Avenue in Riverside has been bought by someone who really appreciates the important part the house has played in East Providence's historic fabric. We thank the Nichols for their fine stewardship of this house and welcome the new owners.

Our great thanks to member Virginia Gonsalves for her entertaining and very informative talk on the Cape Verdean Museum and the many contributions the Cape Verde people have made to this area. She brought photos and pieces from the traveling exhibit for us to look at and reminded us that a Cape Verdean Museum idea sprang from the dual exhibit which she and Edna Anness put together many years ago. The Museum has now outgrown its space on upper Waterman Avenue and has plans to move into a shared space in Pawtucket, a loss for this community which has been

home for the Cape Verde people for 100 years.

Picnic Alert:

If you've been to Hunt House lately you absolutely know that the picnic must be at Newman Church Hall this June, rain or shine. It has come to our attention that some members have missed being called for suppers. This is definitely not intentional. Please, if you find yourself not being contacted by the week before the picnic, call the Hunt House at 438-1750 to let us know. We want to see you!

Phillipsdale Historic District: First Public Workshop

The East Providence Planning Department and the Historic District Commission have announced the first workshop about this proposed historic district:

**MONDAY – JUNE 6th –7:00 PM
MYRON FRANCIS SCHOOL
CAFETERIA**

This will be the time to ask any questions about boundaries, restrictions, and process. We hope to see great support from the EPHS for this new district.

The Gazette

Is published monthly by the
East Providence
Historical Society

P.O. Box 4774, East Providence, RI
02916-4774
Tel. (401) 438-1750
Web Site: ephist.org

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- Florence Adams *Telephone*
- Reinhard Wohlgemuth *Webmaster*

Museum News

By Edna Anness

We had a request from the American Chemical Society to add them as a link on our website. Do visit our website and follow the new link to read about Rumford Baking Powder and its history. Many thanks to Reinhard.

Next fall, for two semesters, we will have an intern interested in History. She is a senior at Rhode Island College and Deb Ormerod and Maggie Dooley will be working with her. Her name is Kristine Calia and she is from East Providence.

Past Perfect is a computer program for accessioning our artifacts. We intend to purchase the program and before we buy a laptop we want to know if anyone has an extra laptop they no longer need that is not older than three years.

We are also looking for an upright bookcase to use for the Sellew Rumford Collection. By

the way, we have a beautiful oil painting of Lura Sellew. It belonged to Clint and he cherished it. Currently it is on a wall in the parlor

Dorothy Marshall gave several things to the Museum and passed away recently. You may recall her Mother's wedding gown on display in the Walker Room a few years ago. She also donated her childhood baby carriage holding her very own baby doll currently in the West bedroom. It appears she has left the Society something in her will. She was a very nice lady and never missed one of our teas that we used to have.

Tip Of The Baker's Hat . . .

. . . to the following members who baked for the April members' meeting:

- Andy Valerio
- Mona Breault
- Nancy Moore
- Pat Henry.



The East Providence Historical Society

is dedicated to preserving the heritage
and enjoying the history of our city.

**If you are not a member we invite
you to join now.**

Annual dues are \$15 individual, \$25
family or business, or a Life
Membership for \$150.

Please make check payable to:

East Providence Historical Society

and mail membership form to

**Mona Breault, 23 Case Street,
Rumford, RI 02916**



Membership Form

New

Renewal/Change

Name(s): _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone #: _____

\$15 Individual

\$25 Family/Business

\$150 Life

Calendar Of Events

MAY

Monday, May 23, 7:15 p.m.
 General Meeting – *Public Invited*
 East Bay Manor
 1440 Wampanoag Trail
 Riverside, RI
The Lost Films Recovered!
*Historical films of Rumford
 Chemical.*
Don't miss this first showing!

JUNE

Phillipsdale Historic District
 Workshop
 Monday, June 6, 7:30 p.m.
 Myron Francis Cafeteria

Board Meeting – Date TBA at the
 general meeting.
Members Welcome
 Hunt House Museum
 Hunts Mills Road, Rumford

Sunday, June 12, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
 Hunt House Museum open
 Hunts Mills Road, Rumford

Monday, June 27, 6:00 p.m.
 General Meeting – Annual Picnic
Public Invited
 Newman Church Hall
 Newman Ave., Rumford

The Lost Films Recovered!

Once upon a time, the Rumford Company made a promotional movie about its amazing products. Somehow these old reels from the 30's came to us and were unearthed this past winter by Edna Anness and Ned Connors while rummaging in the attic. Ned took the reels to a restorer and voila! – we have our own Rumford movie to show you. And our own George Donovan made a video 20 years ago which features many of our members who worked for the Rumford which we will revisit also. So come and pick a good seat – popcorn anyone?

Please note the later time.



Gardening Tips

By Jeff Faria, Master Gardener

May is the “bursting out” month in the landscape. Most plants come alive this month and will benefit from a boost of nutrition. Compost, coffee grounds in the lawn, liquid or granular fertilizers and the like, will help most plants put their best leaf forward, have better blooms and be more disease resistant.

Observe your plants and watch for the signs of what they are going through. Counsel them accordingly!

Set out transplants of your favorite veggies; tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, but be careful to cover them if the nighttime temps fall below 40 degrees. I use yogurt container collars around the base to help prevent cutworms from chopping down the seedlings. Newspaper works as well. If you notice your seedling chopped over, stir the soil at the base of the damaged plant. You will likely find the lumberjack (cutworm) burrowed in the soil, waiting for the next night to come out to eat the plant. You can kill the cutworm or feed him to fish in your pond or a neighbor's!

Mow your lawn to a height of 3 inches so it will need less water and withstand the heat of the summer months. Less fertilizer and a few weeds will help our environment.

Start barbecuing, sit out on the deck and watch the beauty of spring unfold before your eyes!

Memorial Fund

The Society's Memorial Fund was established in 1993, in memory of past members, for “the betterment of the Society and with no specific purpose”.

The Memorial Fund is a qualified endowment administered by the Executive Committee. Members and friends wishing to contribute may make checks payable to the East Providence Historical Society and mail to the Society at
 Box 4774
 East Providence, RI 02916-4774

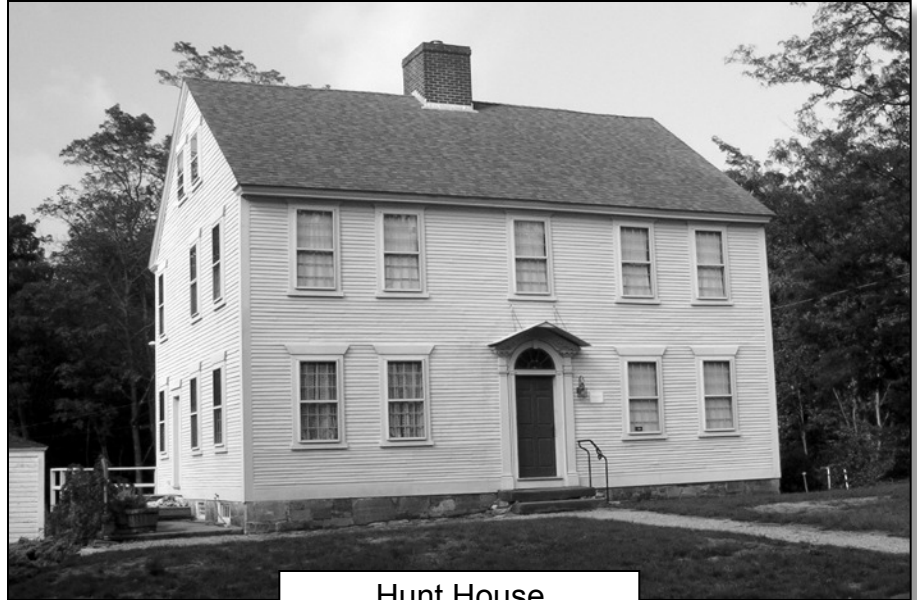
What is the NATIONAL REGISTER?

By Dwight Young

First things first: the name.

It is the National Register of Historic Places. You can call it “the National Register” if you want, or just “the Register,” but it’s neither “the National Registry” nor “the Historic Register.” It’s a question of respect, you see, and the National Register deserves plenty of respect, not only because it has been around for 45 years, but also because it’s one of the most important and useful preservation tools we’ve got.

What exactly is the National Register? One official government website employs an impressive skein of nouns to describe it as a compilation of “districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture.” Another describes the Register more succinctly as “the official list of the Nation’s historic places worthy of preservation.” Both definitions are accurate, but the shorter one provides a better sense of what this amazing list is all about. The diverse and lengthy and ever-expanding roster of treasures on the National Register—more than 86,000 listings, comprising more than 1.7 million individual resources, from steel mills to shotgun houses, railroad stations to roadside attractions, bridges to battlefields, mansions to canals, prisons to



Hunt House

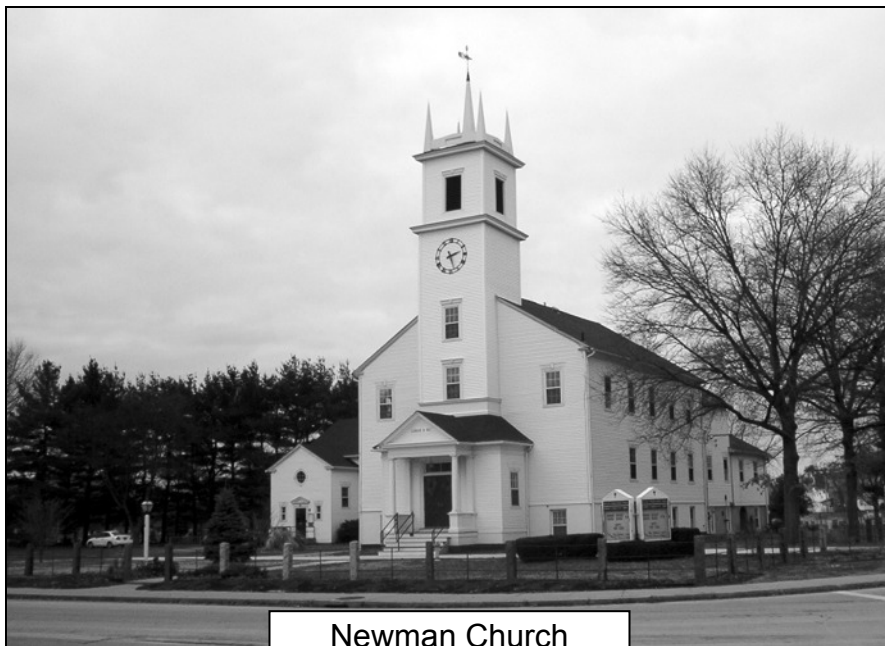
lighthouses, archaeological sites to sailing ships—is made up of things we should care about. Having them around, living with them, and learning from them helps us remember who we are, where we came from, how we got to now. They’re “worthy of

preservation” because they tell the story of us as a people and a nation.

The process by which a property gets listed begins with an exercise in straight-up democracy: Anyone can nominate anything to the National Register. All it takes is basic research and a few required forms. The nomination forms are reviewed and submitted to the Register by the state historic preservation officer (SHPO) in the state where the property is located. As part of this review, the SHPO officially informs the property owner, who may not have been involved in the process up to this point, that his or her property is being

“In” or “On”?

When the National Register of Historic Places was established in 1966, designated properties were listed “in an actual book,” says Paul Lusignan, historian of the National Register. “Over the years the book went by the wayside,” and historians and experts now say that properties are listed on the National Register. “If you look in our brochures you’ll still find in, but we don’t slap anyone on the wrist for using something else,” Lusignan says. “We just really hate it when people call us the National Registry.”



Newman Church

considered for listing. At that time a private owner (or majority of private owners if several are involved) can object. Even if the forms are processed and the property is deemed eligible for listing, if a private owner objects, the property cannot be added to the Register.

But if the nomination does go forward, the SHPO staff (and later, the National Register staff in Washington, D.C.) makes sure that the property meets key criteria for listing: significance and integrity.

Significance simply means that the property possesses some distinguishing quality—a pedigree, if you will, whether historical or architectural or both—that makes it worthy of a spot on the Register. Is it associated with an important person, event, or movement in history? Does it mark a notable advance in design or technology, or is it a premier example of a particular style? Is it the work of a recognized master? Does it have the potential to yield

important archaeological information about our past?

Two important things to bear in mind: First, scoring a “yes” to any one of those questions may be enough to make a property eligible for the National Register; in other words, the property doesn’t have to be both historically noteworthy and architecturally significant to be listed. Second, the Register is intended to recognize properties of local as well as national

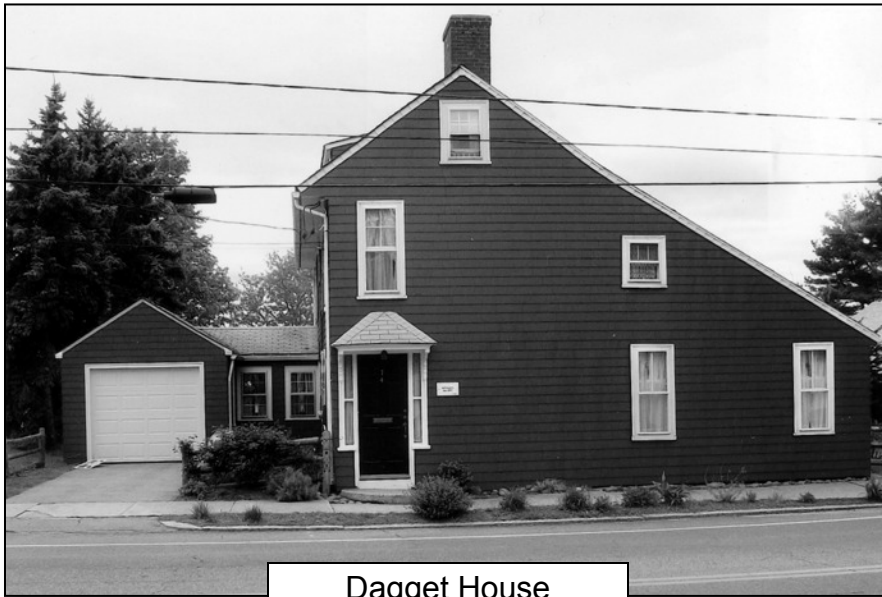
significance; many listed properties are deemed worthy of preservation because they played important roles in the history of their communities, not in the history of the nation as a whole.

The issue of integrity involves determining whether the features that contribute to the property’s significance—its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, and the like—remain largely intact. A house maybe notable because it was designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, for example, but has Wright’s original design been radically altered through years of remodeling? Similarly, a building may be significant because a history-making event took place there, but has it been moved from the site where the event occurred? If the answer to either question is “yes,” the property’s integrity could be considered destroyed or compromised, potentially making it ineligible for Register listing.

Generally speaking, properties must be at least 50 years old to be added to the National Register. (Properties that have achieved significance in the last 50 years

Go to the Source

The National Park Service website, nps.gov/nr, offers valuable information about the National Register, including guidance about evaluating different types of historic places, a searchable database, sample nomination forms, and a step-by-step guide to listing a property. The website can also help you find your state historic preservation officer, -the go-to source for information about preservation in your state. Not only will your SHPO provide information on a wide range of preservation-related topics, he or she will also guide you through the processes of nominating a property to the Register and qualifying for rehab tax credits.

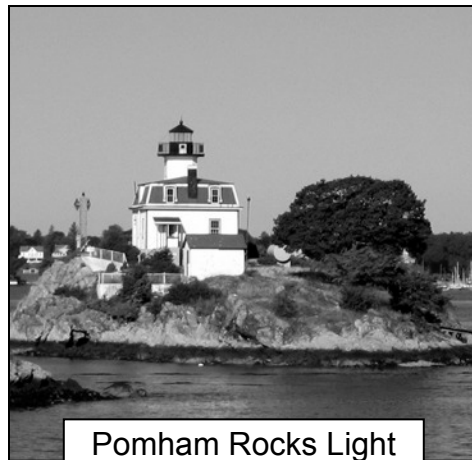


Dagget House

First, listing on the Register is generally the threshold for eligibility for whatever preservation funding may be available from federal and state governments. Admittedly, there aren't huge pots of money out there awaiting distribution, but the preservation funding sources that do exist (and, it's safe to assume, those that might be established in the future) typically award their grants and loans only to properties on the Register.

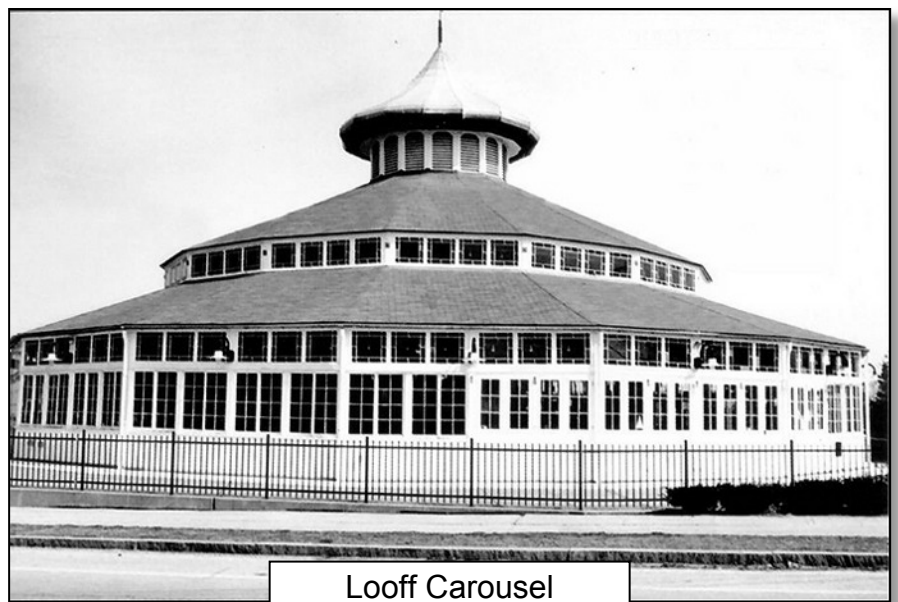
Similarly, owners of some types of Register-listed properties are eligible for generous tax credits that can help offset the costs of rehabilitation. Since it was established in 1976, the federal government's historic rehabilitation tax credit program has helped spark the rehabilitation of thousands of historic structures, from modest main street storefronts to high-rise office towers. Moreover, the success of the federal program has led several states to develop their own preservation tax incentives that can be combined with the federal credits.

may qualify if they are of exceptional importance.) It's worth noting that 50 years is a mere blip on the national timeline. The Kennedy Administration, the civil rights era, the space race ... properties from that not-so-long-ago period are by no means ancient, but many of them are now eligible for the National Register. What's more, this 50-year threshold is constantly moving, so every year, a new bunch of properties comes of age, becoming eligible for—and often getting listed on—the Register. This means, obviously, that the National Register will never be “done.” The nation's official list of things worth preserving is, and always will be, a work in progress.



Pomham Rocks Light

Preservation professionals rely on the National Register as an awesomely useful planning tool—so useful, in fact, that it's hard to imagine how we got along before it was established in 1966. But what about the actual owners of properties included on the Register? What do they get out of it? Some pretty nice benefits, that's what.

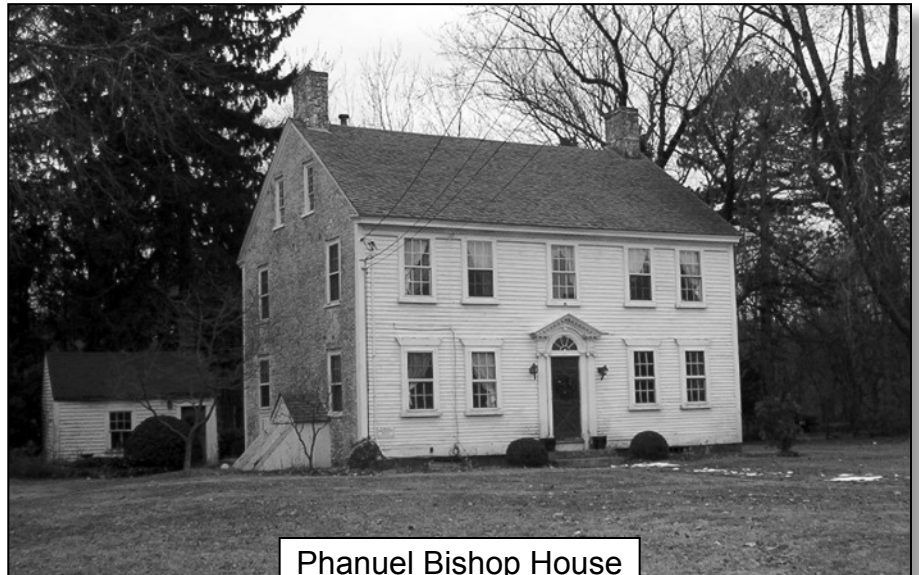


Loeff Carousel

National Register designation also provides a measure of protection through Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Section 106 requires that federal agencies provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the SHPO an opportunity to comment prior to funding, licensing, or approving a project that will affect a property listed on or eligible for the Register. Although the advisory council doesn't have the power to halt a harmful project permanently, it can—and does—work with the sponsoring agency, preservationists, and other interested parties to seek ways to avoid or mitigate adverse impacts.

Finally, there's this: Inclusion on the National Register is an honor. The owner of a Register-listed house can take pride in saying, "My home is important; the federal government says so." That's a feel-good benefit that means a lot to many people.

Now for the other side of the coin. What restrictions are imposed on the owner of a National Register-listed property? None under federal law. That's



Phaniel Bishop House



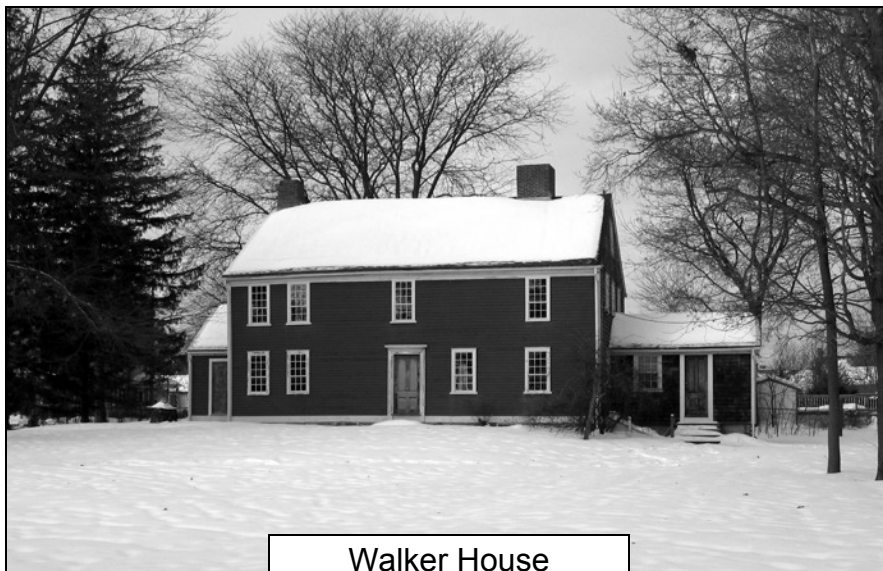
Bicknell-Armington House

right, none. Nada. Zip. Zilch. Fuhgeddaboutit.

This is the most widely misunderstood fact about the National Register: Listing imposes no restrictions on an owner's right to do anything with his or her property within the limits of local laws and regulations. Here's another way to say it: Any restrictions on an owner's right to manage his or her property in any manner are imposed by state or local law, not by the National Register. (If an owner plans to use federal funds or permits for a project that would destroy a historic property, that's a different story.) So inclusion on the Register does not ensure preservation in perpetuity. A responsible owner is the key to any property's survival.

Note: This article was reprinted from the May-June 2011 issue of PRESERVATION magazine.

Photos of East Providence properties on the National Register are from the Historical Society Collection.



Walker House



East Providence Historical Society
P.O. Box 4774
East Providence, RI 02916

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SLATE OF OFFICERS FOR 2011-2012

At the April meeting, the membership voted unanimously to override the by-law concerning a two term limit for the President. All other officers agreed to remain.

President: Nancy Moore
1st Vice President: Kris Rose
2nd Vice President : Edna Anness
Secretary: Cheryl Faria
Treasurer: Peter Allen

