

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Providence	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
State Arsenal

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Armory of the Providence Marine Corps of Artillery

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
176 Benefit Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Providence

STATE: Rhode Island      CODE: RI      COUNTY: Providence      CODE: 007

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC (Yes): <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

STREET AND NUMBER:  
State House, 90 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence      STATE: Rhode Island      CODE: RI

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Dorrance and Washington Streets

CITY OR TOWN: Providence      STATE: Rhode Island      CODE: RI

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
College Hill Demonstration Grant Study. Project R. I., D--1.

DATE OF SURVEY: 1959       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Providence Redevelopment Agency

STREET AND NUMBER:  
10 Dorrance Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence      STATE: Rhode Island      CODE: RI

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Rhode Island

COUNTY: Providence

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ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The State Arsenal was completed in 1839 from the designs of Russell Warren for the First Regiment of Light Infantry (Providence Journal, March 15, 1839); its cost was \$ 3,000. It is a gabled structure of eighty by forty feet, constructed of chipped stone (flint) or rubble, covered by cement (which apparently at one time was a smoother coat than now and was all or in part incised or painted to give the effect of regular dressed ashlar). It is of two-storey height above a basement set into a steeply sloping hillside site--the site conditions being the same both before and after the building was moved. This basement does not show when only the building's (east) entrance elevation on Benefit Street is viewed. This façade, rising directly from the sidewalk, has a gabled centre section, which originally had battlements on the slopes of the gable, with a two-storey portal, slightly recessed, of pointed Gothic form. Only the lower portion of this heavily panelled and iron-studded portal, which is divided in two by a horizontal transom, contains workable doors. Flanking the centre section are two square, battlemented towers pushed out from the front corners of the building; these towers have narrow slit-windows at three levels. The main body of the building runs back towards the west for a length of five bays and is very plain. Its tall windows are diamond-paned and are protected externally by strong, black-painted iron shutters.

Within, the main floor is given over entirely to the large drill-hall except for a small vestibule inside the portal, a very shallow hallway, the stairs in the towers, a small janitor's office and a lavatory. Three Tudor arches of good width and height occupy the main spaces of the drill-hall's east end: one contains the principal door into that hall; the other two accommodate auxiliary folding doors below and projecting balconies at stair-landing-level above. The second floor is divided into two large and one small rooms, a coat-room and another lavatory. Space in the basement is taken by a museum room, a large storage room, kitchen, heater and lavatory areas.

Woodwork throughout the building is generally of dark-stained, simply panelled wainscot form, with some trim employing pointed arches and some panelling done in the linenfold design. The drill-hall's ceiling has exposed beams forming narrow compartments (supposedly supported by curved brackets around the four sides), and here the wood has been painted. The transverse beams have been given a slight concavity, or minimally arched effect, on their lower sides, and there are turned wooden pendants where major beams intersect--altogether the simplest of Gothic Revival decorative treatment.

The building was in 1906 moved a very short distance north to the corner of Benefit and Meeting Streets, when it became imperative to put a railroad tunnel under its original site. It has been excellently maintained both inside and out, its utility equipment etc. kept up to date. It is in frequent, though not constant, use.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century            | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1839

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____                                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____                                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The State Arsenal is in its locale a small but important example of early battlemented Gothic Revival architecture, a pseudo-fortress appropriate to its internal militia activities. It is one of the few excursions into the Gothic manner by Russell Warren, a Rhode Island native who was one of the outstanding architects in this and other states during the full first half of the XIX Century. The arsenal is an important part of our architectural legacy, an important property of the state and also an important component of the College Hill Historic District, already a major listing, en bloc, in the National Register.

It was erected for the First Light Infantry, but that corps found itself eventually unable to complete payment for the building it had had constructed. The building was then, in the 1850's, taken over by the state, which leased back the property for a 1,000-year period at an annual rate of six-and-one quarter cents. During the Dorr Rebellion in Rhode Island, in 1842, state ammunition and state troops were housed in the arsenal along with the Marine Corps of Artillery and the Kentish Guards of East Greenwich, who had been called up to help protect the building.

When--later in the mid-XIX-Century--the infantry unit left to occupy larger quarters, the lease was taken by the Marine Corps of Artillery, and they have been there ever since. This latter volunteer military body was chartered in 1801 by the Providence Marine Society, an association of merchants and ship-owners, and was the first militia battalion of light artillery in the United States. It has been the parent body of all artillery sent in all wars from the Civil War through World War II. The corps has until the recent past used the building for drill and training, for many social events; it is officially seated there; it preserves its records, relics and portraits, its Barker Artillery Museum of World War II (named for one of its many members outstanding in wartime accomplishment) in the arsenal.

(See Continuation Sheet.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

8. Significance.

The building is opened occasionally for the meetings or entertainments of various historical and social groups and for special touring groups; and the drill-hall provides a good ballroom floor for a weekly dancing class. At present there are are thoughts and negotiations regarding future use of the arsenal as office headquarters for a distinguished group of military scholars, historians and collectors. This organisation, utilising those spaces not retained by the Marine Corps of Artillery, could contribute substantially to the building's upkeep and its necessary architectural preservation--at the same time giving it more use and supervision than it now enjoys and making it more available for visitation.

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Providence Preservation Society: Third Street Festival ... (Providence, Rhode Island, 1962), pp. 32-33.  
 Cady, John Hutchins: The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence, 1636-1950 (Providence, Rhode Island, 1957), p. 111.  
 Wheeler, Robert L.: Five Sons Were Generals. Providence Marine Corps of Artillery (in Providence Sunday Journal Magazine, February 10, 1952), pp. 3-7.  
 Hartwell, Everett S.: An Historical Sketch of the Providence Marine Corps of Artillery, 1801-1951 (Providence, Rhode Island, 1952), 14 pp.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees	Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "	41°	49' 40"	71° 24' 31" W
NE	° ' "	° ' "			
SE	° ' "	° ' "			
SW	° ' "	° ' "			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Richard B. Harrington, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission DATE: February 15, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:  
State House, 90 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island CODE: 111

**12: STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

<p>As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:</p> <p>National <input type="checkbox"/> State <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Title _____</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____                  Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____                  Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date _____</p>
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Providence	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON: State Arsenal			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Armory of the Providence Marine Corps of Artillery			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 176, Benefit Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Providence			
STATE: Rhode Island	CODE 44	COUNTY: Providence	CODE 007
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT: Alice Hauck			
DATE OF PHOTO: 1971			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, State House, 90 Smith Street, Providence, R. I., 02903			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.  Drill-hall, looking east and showing balconies and (beyond centre doorway) exterior portal.			

**THE MARINE ARTILLERY QUICK STEP.**



*Composed and dedicated to the Officers and Members of the*  
**PROVIDENCE MARINE CORPS OF ARTILLERY,**

— **B. P. ROBINSON.** —

*Arranged for the Piano Forte by*

**G. KNAEDEL.**

*Thayer & Co. Lith.*

BOSTON.

*Price 25 cts. net.*

Published by **CHAS. H. KEITH, 67 & 69 Court St.**

*Entered as second-class matter, October 3, 1862, by Chas. H. Keith, in No. 10,000, Office at the Exchange Street, Boston, Mass.*



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON: State Arsenal			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Armory of the Providence Marine Corps of Artillery			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 176, Benefit Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Providence			
STATE: Rhode Island	CODE 044	COUNTY: Providence	CODE 007
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT: Anne S. K. Brown Military Collection, Brown University Library			
DATE OF <del>PHOTO</del> LITHOGRAPH: 1843; copy negative, 1970			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, State House, Providence, Rhode Island, 02903			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. Exterior seen from the south-east in 1843, showing also the uniform of the artillery corps; from a sheet-music cover lithographed by Thayer & Co., Boston.			

GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES

Latitude: 41° 49' 40" N  
Longitude: 71° 24' 31" W



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Providence	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON: State Arsenal			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Armory of the Providence Marine Corps of Artillery			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 176, Benefit Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Providence			
STATE: Rhode Island	CODE 44	COUNTY: Providence	CODE 007
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE: U. S. Geological Survey			
SCALE: 1: 24,000			
DATE: 1957			
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			