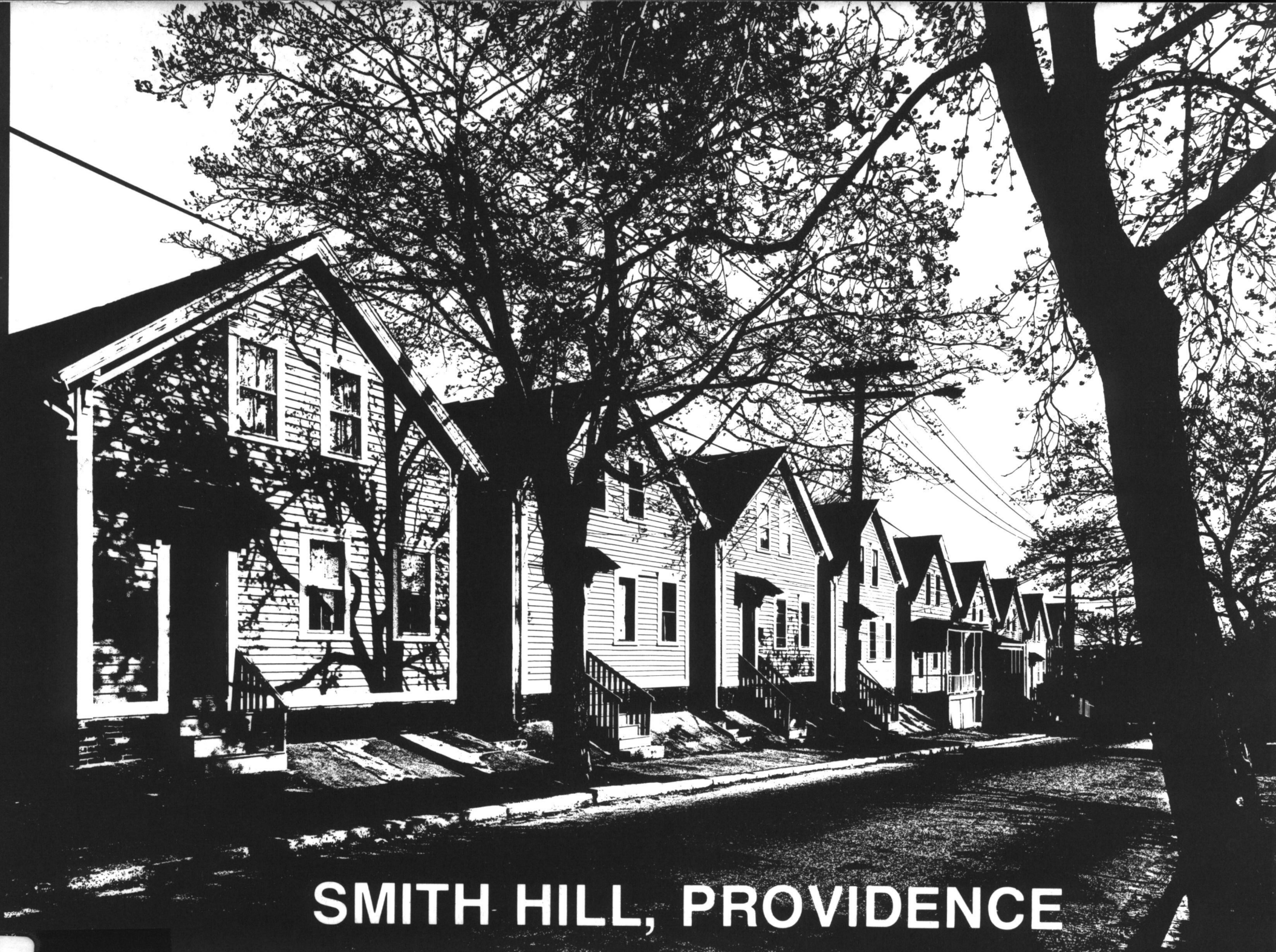


STATEWIDE HISTORICAL PRESERVATION REPORT P-P-4
RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION



SMITH HILL, PROVIDENCE

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4.00

This report is jointly sponsored and funded as a planning tool by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission and the City of Providence. Commission activities are supported by state and local funds and by the Department of the Interior, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, under provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. City funding was provided through the Mayor's Office of Community Development. It is issued as part of the program set forth in Rhode Island's "Historical Preservation Plan," first edition (1970).

The city and the state Historical Preservation Commission are jointly sponsoring a comprehensive historical survey of Providence. When complete, this planning study will include an overview report on the city as a whole and individual reports on several historic neighborhoods. Reports have been issued on South Providence and Elmwood; this Smith Hill report is the third in the series.

The Rhode Island Historical Society has made an invaluable contribution to the preparation of this report through the assistance of its staff and library.

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Cover: Andrew Dickhaut Cottages (1883); 115-141 Bath Street.

Title Page: Smith Hill from the Great Salt Cove; watercolor, ca 1845. Circled by a promenade in the late 1840s and filled in the late 1880s, the Cove physically set Smith Hill off from the settlements to the east and south.

This document is a copy of the original survey published in 1980. It has not been corrected or updated.

Since the original publication:

- >additional properties have been entered on the National Register;
- >some financial incentives referred to in these pages are no longer available;
- >some new financial incentives are available.

For up-to-date information, please contact:

RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
150 Benefit St.

Providence, RI 02903

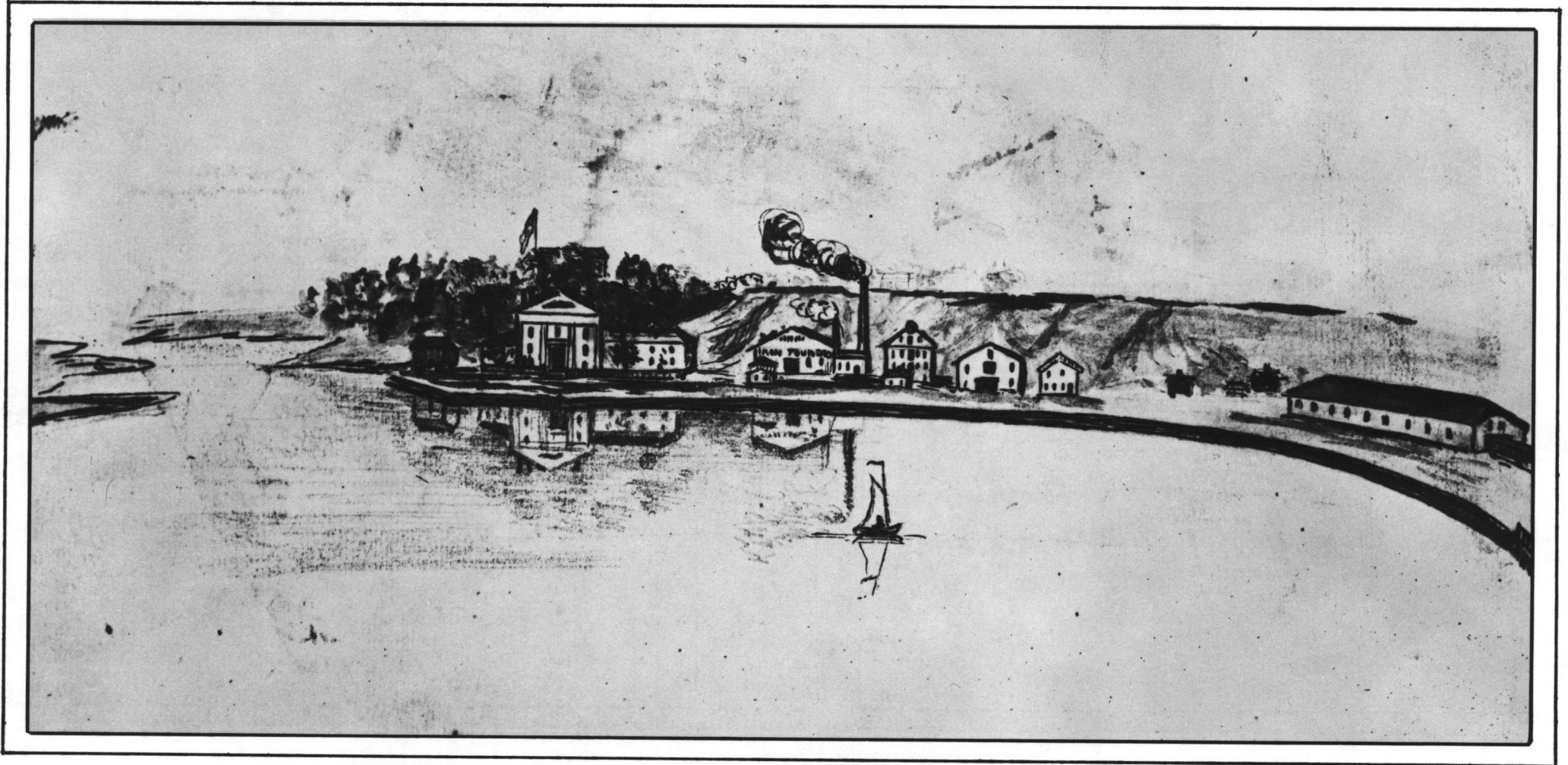
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The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission is your state agency for historical preservation. The Commission identifies and protects historic buildings, districts, landscapes, structures, and archaeological sites throughout the State of Rhode Island.

Smith Hill, Providence
Statewide Historical Preservation Report P-P-4



Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
June 1980



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Old State House
150 Benefit Street
Providence, R. I. 02903
(401) 277-2678

June 16, 1980

The Honorable J. Joseph Garrahy, Governor
State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
State House
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Governor Garrahy:

It is with pleasure that I transmit herewith Smith Hill, Providence--
Statewide Historical Preservation Report P-P-4, the twenty-eighth publication in the Statewide Historical Preservation Report series.

This report provides an analysis of the historical and architectural growth of the Smith Hill neighborhood of Providence and recommends a preservation program which should be incorporated into the city's overall planning effort.

With the publication of this report, the Commission is well on its way to fulfilling its responsibility to record the state's rich cultural resources. Eight additional reports are now being prepared; their completion will contribute significantly toward the achievement of our goal of producing reports on all thirty-nine cities and towns in the state. Three reports have already been published concerning Providence neighborhoods: The West Side, South Providence, and Elmwood. Studies of Providence industrial sites and Downtown Providence are in final stages of preparation. In addition, a city-wide overview report will be published.

The Commission believes that its effort, as represented by this and other reports, will further the cause of historical preservation in Rhode Island.

Very sincerely,

Georgette F. Downing
Mrs. George E. Downing
Chairman



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION
Old State House
150 Benefit Street
Providence, R.I. 02903
(401) 277-2678

June 16, 1980

The Honorable Vincent A. Cianci, Jr., Mayor
The City of Providence
25 Dorrance Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Mayor Cianci:

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission is pleased to submit in final published form this survey and report Smith Hill, Providence--Statewide Preservation Report P-P-4. The product of detailed study by Wm. McKenzie Woodward of the Commission staff, it is truly a joint effort on the part of the City of Providence and the State Commission. Not only has the local financial match been supplied by your office through the City's Community Development program, but our work has further benefitted from the generous efforts of many City officials and private citizens who have contributed time and shared information of great importance for this study.

Three reports have already been published concerning Providence neighborhoods: The West Side, South Providence, and Elmwood. Providence Industrial Sites and Downtown reports are nearing completion. Further, a citywide overview is in preparation and will be published.

We hope Smith Hill, Providence will prove of lasting value to the neighborhood and to the city as a whole as an educational and planning tool, serving as a guide to Smith Hill's rich history and cultural heritage and providing a vehicle to further neighborhood revitalization.

Very truly yours,

Georgette F. Downing
Mrs. George E. Downing
Chairman

PREFACE

In 1968, the Rhode Island General Assembly established the Historical Preservation Commission, charging it with, among other duties, the task of developing a state preservation program following the guidelines of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as administered by the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, United States Department of the Interior. Citizen members of the Commission are appointed by the Governor; the chairmen of the House and Senate Finance Committees of the General Assembly, the Director of the Department of Economic Development, the Director of the Department of Environmental Management, the Chief of the Division of Statewide Planning, and the State Building Code Commissioner serve as ex-officio members. The Director of the Department of Community Affairs has been appointed by the Governor as the State Historic Preservation Officer for Rhode Island.

The Historical Preservation Commission is responsible for conducting a statewide survey of historic sites and places and from the survey recommending properties of local, state, or national significance for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places; administering federal grants-in-aid to Register properties for acquisition and development; and developing a state historical preservation plan. Additional duties include compiling and maintaining a State Register of Historic Places; assisting state and municipal agencies in the area of historical preservation planning by undertaking special project-review studies; and regulating archeological exploration on state lands and under waters of state jurisdiction.

The Rhode Island Statewide Historical Survey, inaugurated in June, 1969, has been designed to locate, identify, map, and report on buildings, sites, areas, and objects of cultural significance. In line with the current movement among preservationists, planners, and architectural and social historians, the total environment of a survey area is considered. In addition to outstanding structures and historical sites, buildings of all types, periods, and styles which constitute the fabric of a community are recorded and evaluated. Presently, archeological resources are to be recorded in a separate survey effort.

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Smith Hill before 1873. The 1848 Boston Freight Station, still standing on Canal Street, is visible in the center. Beyond it is the original St. Patrick's Church. At upper left are the bluffs surrounding the Jefferson Plain, just in front of Colonel Benjamin Smith's house (ca 1800; demolished, 1926).

I. INTRODUCTION

The historical and architectural survey of Smith Hill, Providence, Rhode Island, was initiated by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission in cooperation with the City of Providence in July, 1976. The survey was funded by the Commission through a survey and planning grant from the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service and by the city with funds made available through the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

To accomplish the goals of the statewide survey program three stages are necessary: field survey, compilation of maps, and preparation of a final report for each area surveyed. A standard survey form, the "Historic Building Data Sheet," has been prepared by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission for use throughout the state. It incorporates both architectural and historical information and a photograph of each building or site recorded. Historical information is obtained through the use of local maps, state atlases, land and tax records, published and unpublished histories, and guidebooks and manuscripts which are readily available. The survey encompasses the neighborhood's topography; its settlement and street patterns; and its commercial, industrial, institutional, and residential buildings. Data from the survey forms is ultimately transferred onto maps so that information pertaining to historical preservation can be easily used for planning purposes.

Upon completion of the survey and review by the Commission office and in appropriate local repositories, the survey forms, maps, and final reports are filed at the

Commission office and in appropriate local repositories, such as the city or town hall, historical society, or library.

This report deals with those manifestations of Smith Hill's past which should be retained as a living, active part of the neighborhood's present and future life. Within the urban context of Providence as a whole, it attempts a concise, yet comprehensive, history of the Smith Hill neighborhood and its architectural development, together with recommendations for preservation planning. In the appendices are explanations of the National Register of Historic Places, the Grants-in-Aid program, and the survey form of the Historical Preservation Commission. An inventory of noteworthy structures and sites in Smith Hill and a list of recommendations to the National Register are also included.

The Historical Preservation Commission thanks the following organizations and individuals for their aid in completing the Smith Hill survey: Nancy Chudacoff, Anthony DiBiasio, Norma LaSalle Daoust, Helen Keabian, Priscilla Martel, Marsha Peters, the Providence Public Library, and the staff of the City of Providence Tax Assessor's Office.

The objectives of the report are threefold: it is a planning tool, which can be used to guide future development; it is an educational resource, useful in the study of state and local history; and it can be a catalyst in awakening civic pride, helping residents to become aware of the historical and architectural environment in which they live and encouraging them to take a positive interest in the future of their neighborhood. To that end this effort is dedicated.

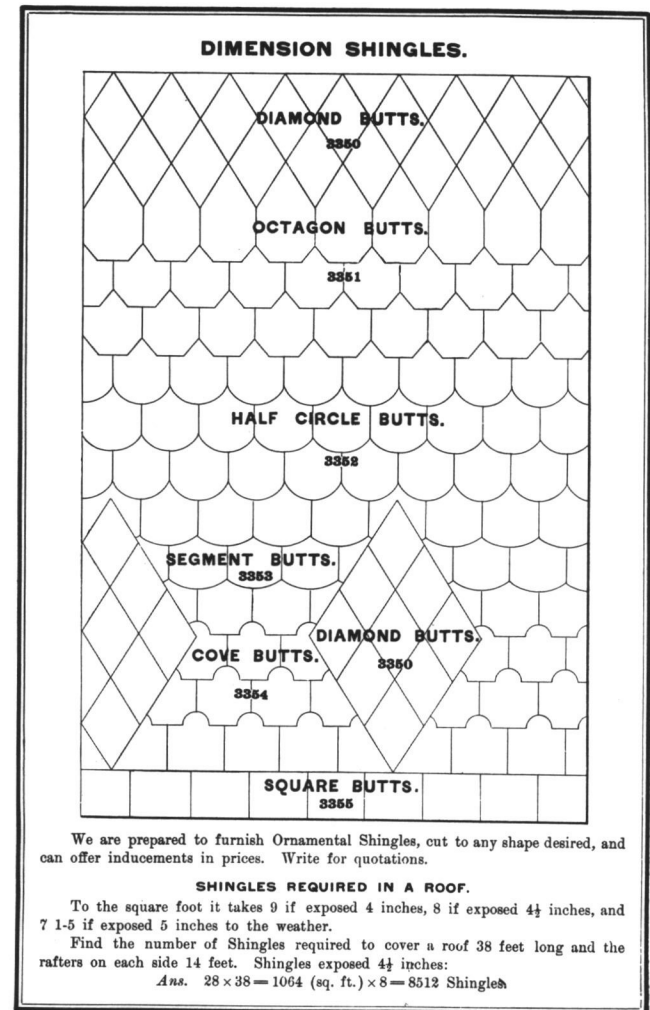


Fig. 1: Ornamental shingle types, from *Late Victorian Architectural Details*. Increased interest in picturesque surface texture in the late 19th century made shingles such as these extremely popular; many of these are commonly found on houses of the period throughout Smith Hill.

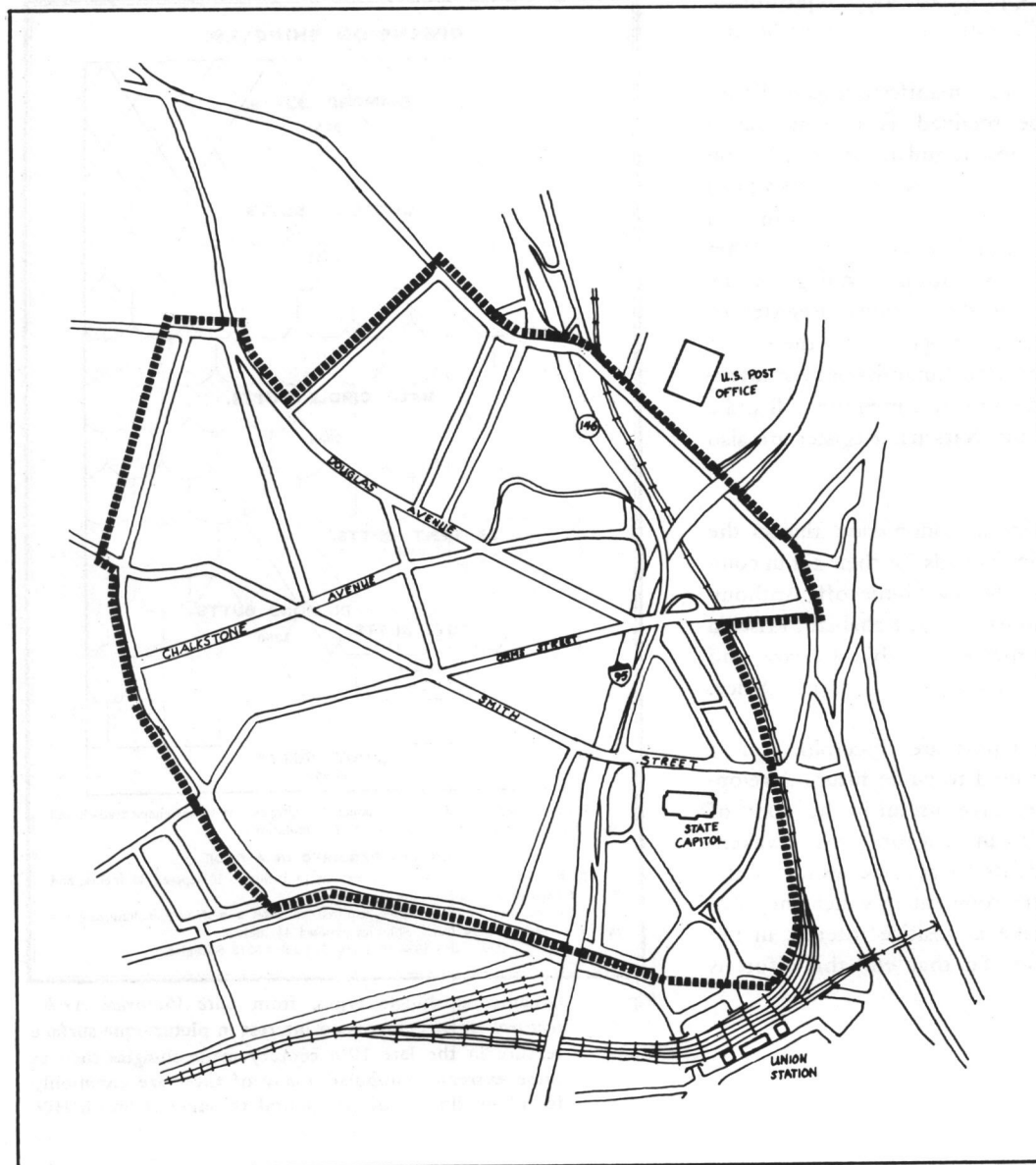


Fig. 2: Map of Providence; showing the Smith Hill survey area.

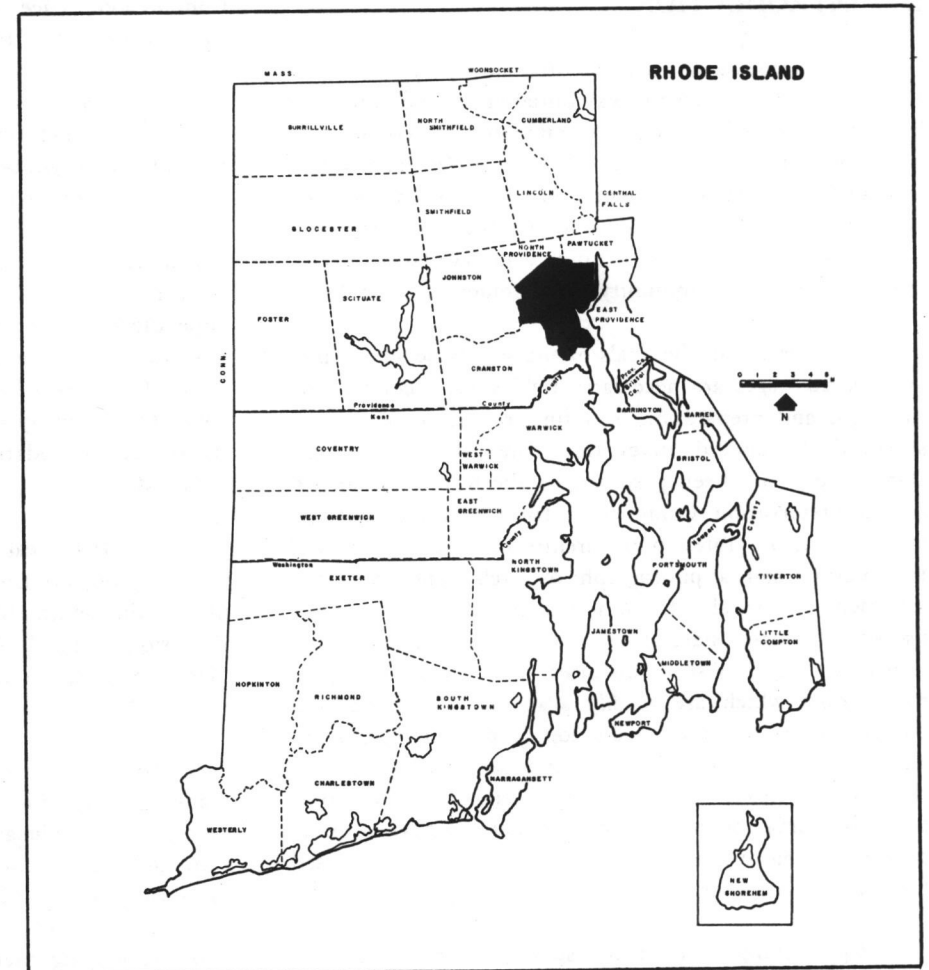


Fig. 3: Map of Rhode Island; showing the location of Providence.

II. SETTING

The Smith Hill Neighborhood is a small, densely built-up, largely residential area to the northwest of the Providence central business district. The predominate building type is the wood-frame dwelling, either two-and-a-half or three stories and constructed between 1875 and 1925. House lots are small and generally uniform in their narrow-end orientation to the often treeless streets. These houses are complemented by small commercial buildings and blocks, located primarily at intersections of major streets. Institutional buildings—schools, churches, libraries, neighborhood centers—are dotted through the neighborhood. Mid-twentieth-century urban decay has occasioned random demolition, but the dense built fabric remains largely intact.

This residential core was for years bordered on the south and east by heavy industrial development along the rivers. While a number of these nineteenth-century industrial buildings remains, many of those located to the east along the Moshassuck River have disappeared.

Smith Hill remains today a working-class neighborhood, much as it developed. While ethnic composition of the neighborhood has changed, Smith Hill retains something of its sense of community. The traditional center of the oldest immigrant community in Providence, the Irish, Smith Hill attracted over the years other ethnic groups, including Russian Jews, Swedes, and Armenians. Some of these populations have virtually abandoned Smith Hill, but others remain in strong concentration. This ethnic continuity along with certain geographical buffers has maintained the definition of the neighborhood.

The neighborhood, as its name suggests, is situated on a hill—one of the so-called Seven Hills of Providence—which reaches its crest of approximately seventy feet above sea level on Smith Street near the Capitol. The land declines slightly to the north and west and drops less gently toward the Woonasquattucket River on the south and to the Moshassuck River on the east.

For the purposes of this survey, it is defined geographically as that area bounded on the east and southeast

by the railroad tracks; on the southwest by the Woonasquattucket River; on the west by the Dean Street Connector, Pleasant Valley Parkway, Raymond Street, and Oakland Avenue; on the northwest by Douglas Avenue, the Chad Brown-Admiral Terrace Housing Project, and Admiral Street; and on the northeast by Route 146 and Orms Street.

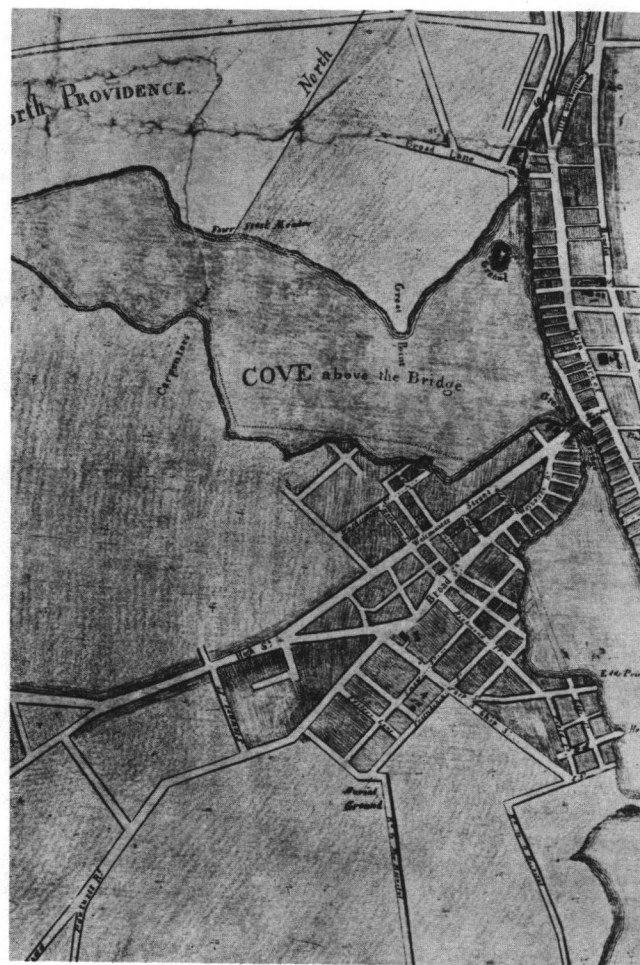


Fig. 4: Section, Map of Providence (1803); by Daniel Anthony.

Physical definition of the neighborhood as it exists today is the result of an evolutionary development of boundaries. When Providence was first settled—and until 1846—Smith Hill was separated from the East Side and Downtown Providence by natural boundaries: the Moshassuck and Woonasquattucket Rivers and the Great Salt Cove. Improvements to both rivers, the creation of the Cove Basin, and the eventual filling of the Cove have virtually eliminated these bodies of water as physical boundaries. The political changes in the area have also affected its growth; from 1765 to 1874 the area approximately northwest of I-95 was part of North Providence, a factor which served somewhat to limit its urbanization. Finally, a number of large-scale building projects which surround Smith Hill serve as buffers, confining the neighborhood to a small area. The railroad tracks and the industrial corridor form the longest of these man-made barriers. The Capitol and its extensive sloping grounds further separate the residential core of Smith Hill from Downtown Providence, and the construction of I-95 and Route 146 have reinforced this isolation of the neighborhood along its southern and western edges. The grounds of two late nineteenth-century estates—the Davis Estate, now the site of Veterans' Hospital, and the Chase-Burke Estate, now the site of Nathaniel Greene Middle School—provide large open spaces which have physically limited continuous western growth. Similarly, the Chad Brown-Admiral Terrace Housing Project marks a northern limit of Smith Hill, both today as a developed parcel and, until its construction, as vacant, privately held land. Government projects begun in the 1950s have created large buffer zones in Route 146, the West River Redevelopment Area, and the Randall Square Redevelopment Area.

Smith Hill is traversed by five primary thoroughfares: fanning out from the eastern end are—roughly northwest-southeast—Smith Street, Douglas Avenue, and Admiral Street and—roughly northeast-southwest—Orms Street and Chalkstone Avenue. Interstate Highway 95 is a major—and inaccessible—axis which divides the eastern quarter of Smith Hill from the remainder of the neighborhood. The irregular triangular and trapezoidal areas created by these large arteries are divided by short cross streets, laid out independently by numerous nineteenth-century developers, creating a somewhat random street pattern.

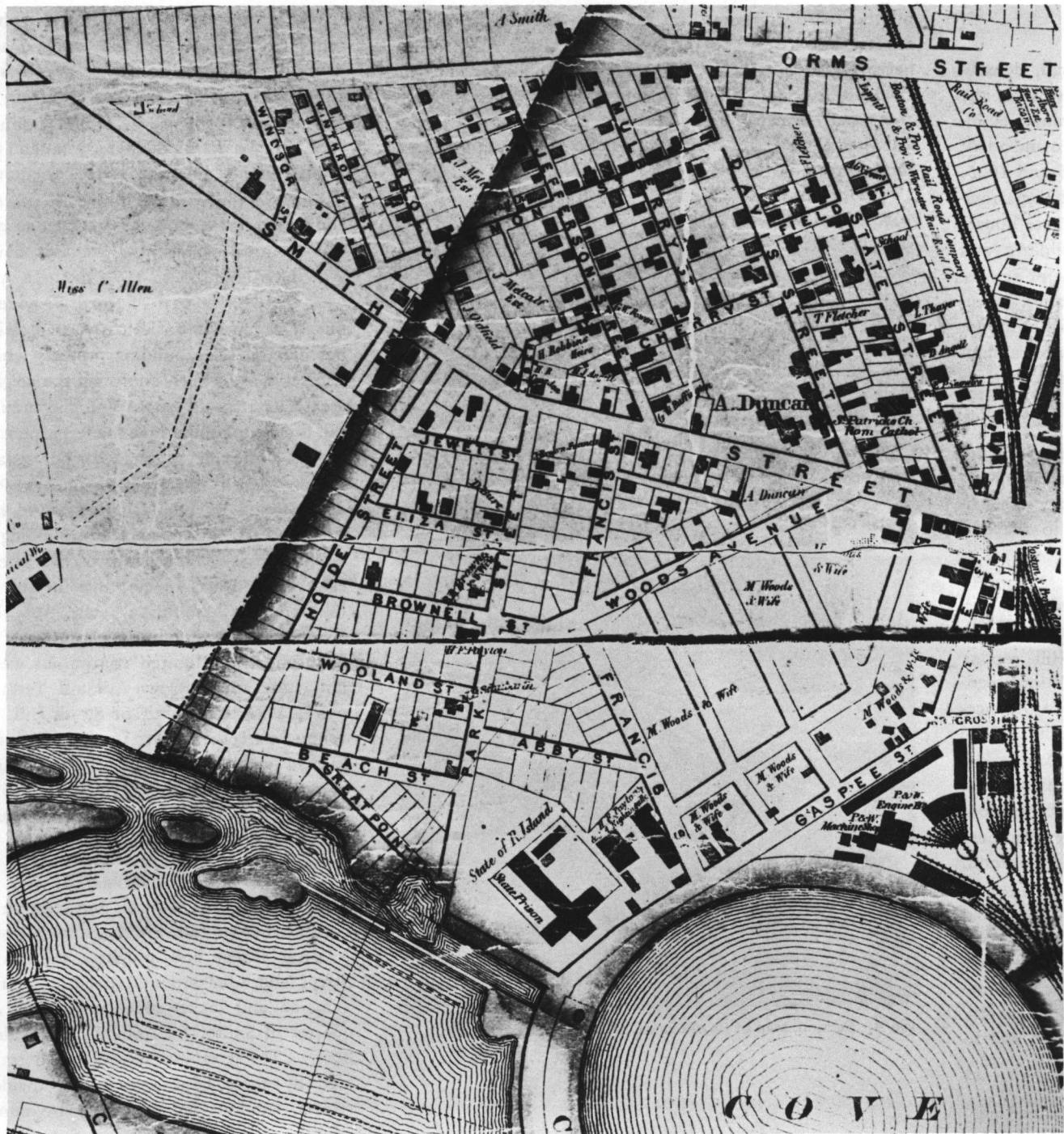


Fig. 5: Smith Hill in 1857, from the 1857 map of Providence by Henry F. Walling.

III. HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Smith Hill is within Roger Williams's Grand Purchase from the sachems Canonicus and Miantinomi. Before the first European settlers arrived, the area including Smith Hill lay between the lands of the Narragansett and Wampanoag Tribes, both part of the larger Algonquin nation. The Indians left no traceable impact upon Smith Hill, neither trails, habitation sites, nor particular land forms which are known by Indian names; however, the area contains several attributes that would have favored the presence of aboriginal man.

The immediate post-glacial environment in this area about 10,000 years ago probably included the earliest human inhabitants, small groups of nomadic hunters who followed migratory herds of caribou and other large game through sub-arctic spruce forests.

By the Middle Archaic period, between 6000 and 4000 years ago, human populations expanded as a temperate environment similar to today's became established. Seasonal runs of salmon and shad began to frequent the rivers as the sea rose to approach the contemporary level. Although no sites for this period have been recorded in the Providence River area, similar locations were favored elsewhere in New England. During the Late Archaic Period, which lasted until about 3000 years ago, modern estuaries and tidal flats developed, and human populations began to exploit shellfish as an important food resource throughout favorable coastal regions of New England.

Coastal settlement and the increased use of shellfish are even more characteristic of the Woodland period (2600-400 years ago). The likelihood of continuous human utilization of the Smith Hill area during this time is considerable. Historical descriptions report an abundance of shellfish and shad and salmon in the salt cove and Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers. In addition, maps of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries indicate that several Indian trails converged in the general vicinity. The Pawtucket and Louquassuck trails entered the area from the north, the Pequot trail from the west, the Wampanoag trail from the east, and the Watchemoket trail from the southeast.

Early colonial accounts of settlement do not describe Indian settlements in the area; this might be explained by the great plague of 1616-1617 which depopulated many coastal regions of New England. At the time of contact with European settlers the major Narragansett villages were located in South County rather than the Providence area. Given the intensive development of Smith Hill in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it is unlikely that archeological remains from any prehistoric cultural period have survived intact.

When Roger Williams and his band of followers settled at present-day Providence in 1636, the group built their homes on the eastern banks of the Providence and Moshassuck Rivers, along what is now North and South Main Streets on the East Side. The area west of the Moshassuck River, including Smith Hill, was common land used for farming and grazing livestock. The *Early Records of Providence* chronicle the setting aside, in 1658, of the land north of the Woonasquatucket River, including what is now Smith Hill, as the "stated common" for use by Providence residents.

While Smith Hill itself was set aside as common ground, at its eastern edge was the falls of the Moshassuck River, and here (near the present-day Stillman White Foundry at the intersection of Charles and Bark Streets) was begun Providence's first industry, a gristmill operated for the community by John Smith. Smith, who emigrated from Dorchester, England, was banished from Salem along with Williams and came to Providence in 1636. By 1638, he had erected a combination dwelling and mill on the western side of the Moshassuck River (near present-day Mill Street).

The land occupied by Providence's first miller remained in the Smith family until well into the eighteenth century. The Smiths' receiving a large eastern part of the common when it was finally divided in the eighteenth century and their continuing settlement led to the area's identification with the Smith family: "up on the hill by the Smiths" which eventually became "Smith Hill."

By the late 1720s, the growth of small communities at Olneyville and Tripptown (now Manton) and the need for highways connecting them with the compact part of

town brought the first roads across Smith Hill. Before 1729, a road to Olneyville was completed (following present-day Orms and Valley Streets). In 1729, the southern branch of the route through the stated common was constructed (along the course of Douglas and Chalkstone Avenues) to Tripptown. Four years later, the northern branch was completed (along Douglas Avenue and Eaton Street). Later in the century, a short street known as Broad Lane (now Smith Street) was opened at least as far as the then North Providence town line near today's I-95.

The first construction on Smith Hill occurred in the middle of the eighteenth century. In spite of the early decision to maintain the land north of the Woonasquatucket River as common ground, in 1746 the Town Council granted to the heirs of John Smith the land lying between present-day Orms and Smith Streets. This land was platted into house lots for the Smith heirs by Stephen Jackson in 1754, but as late as 1798 the tax rolls indicate that only a handful of modest houses had been built, including the dwelling which stood at 55 Davis Street into the 1930s. The area was to remain sparsely populated until the mid-nineteenth century, and domestic construction was largely limited to the country retreats of inhabitants of the compact part of town.



Fig. 6: House (18th century): 55 Davis Street; photograph, 1931.



Fig. 7: Esek Hopkins House (1754 et seq.); 97 Admiral Street; photograph, ca 1900.

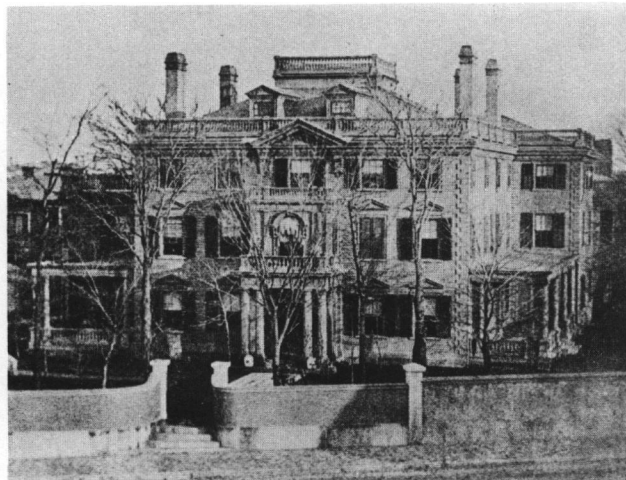


Fig. 8: Colonel Benjamin Smith House (ca 1800); 133 Smith Street; photograph, ca 1930; demolished, 1926.



Fig. 9: Zachariah Allen House (ca 1770); 151 Orms Street; photograph, ca 1930; demolished. The porch and street-level storefronts are later 19th-century additions.

One such place remains; the oldest extant structure on Smith Hill is the Esek Hopkins House at 97 Admiral Street. Today, the setting of the gambrel-roof dwelling retains some of the rural character of the area in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when the land was divided among a few families. Hopkins seems never to have farmed his land, but rather enjoyed it for its pastoral isolation.

The grandest of the early houses was the Federal mansion built in 1800 by Colonel Henry Smith, probably a descendant of the first miller, at the crest of the hill overlooking the sweep of land down to the bluffs overlooking the Great Salt Cove. The house was a large, square, three-story frame structure with elaborate exterior articulation, including quoined corners, pedimented windows, and a projecting center pediment at the roofline decorated with modillions and supported by consoles. The house was razed in 1926 for the construction of the State Office Building on Smith Street.

Other farms and country retreats on Smith Hill have also long since disappeared, the houses demolished and the land platted into small city house lots during the nineteenth century. Thomas Randall Holden—descendant of Randall Holden, one of the founders of Warwick—built a house early in the nineteenth century at the northern end of a strip of land between Smith Street and the Woonasquatucket River. The Zachariah Allen family owned the tract of land bounded by Chalkstone, Douglas, Orms, and Smith Streets as well as a large piece directly west of the Holden Estate; their house stood near the corner of Orms Street and Douglas Avenue. The Pickney Farm comprised most of the land on Smith Hill west of the Allen holdings south of Chalkstone Avenue.

While Smith Hill remained scarcely populated, Camp Hill, the site of the present-day Capitol lawns, was popular as a site for military reviews, picnics, outings, and other recreational activity in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. No doubt this use prompted Fenner Angell, around the time of the Revolution, to build his two-and-a-half-story, gambrel-roof tavern nearby at the corner of Orms and Davis Streets, its location taking advantage of both the major route to the west and this popular gathering spot. The tavern, which survived well into the late nine-

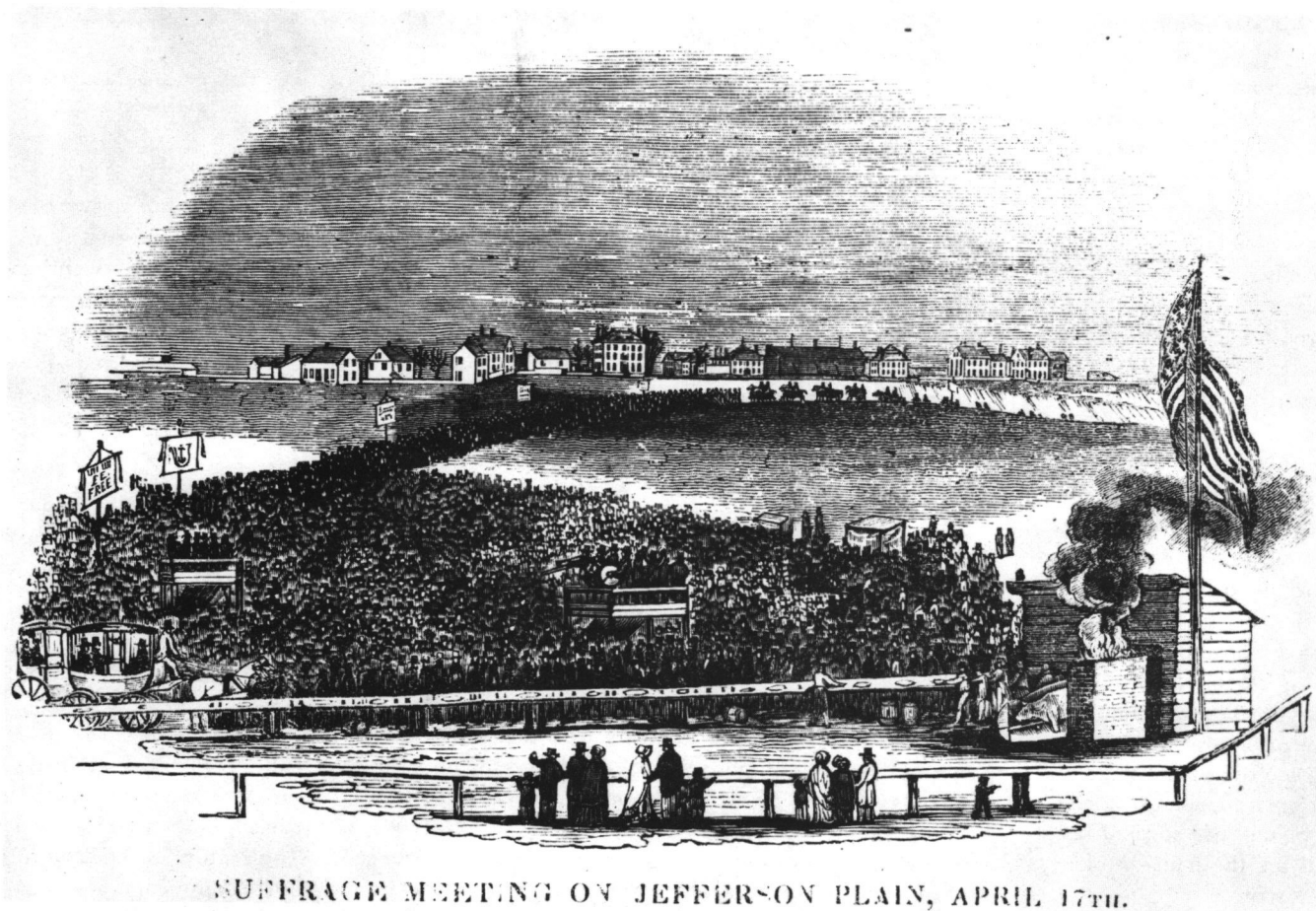
teenth century, achieved notoriety for its rowdy patrons who participated in cockfights, dog fights, and prize fights; further, it was the headquarters in Providence for horse racing, a sport easily accommodated on the gently rolling ground of Camp Hill.

During the early years of the nineteenth century, Camp Hill became known as the Jefferson Plains, reflecting the ardent Jeffersonian Republican politics of Colonel Henry Smith whose large house stood nearby on Smith Street.

In the early nineteenth century, the construction of two turnpikes through Smith Hill augmented the earlier routes north and west. The Douglas Turnpike, chartered in 1805 and opened in 1807, followed the course of the North Branch Road as far as Eaton Street, and thence continued to Douglas, Massachusetts. The Powder Mill Turnpike was chartered in 1810 and opened shortly thereafter: it ran from the North Providence line, then just beyond Holden Street, to Smithfield. The southern end of the Powder Mill Turnpike connected with Smith Street, which had previously ended at the North Providence line. Thus by the early

part of the nineteenth century, the major traffic arteries through Smith Hill were established.

The years of Smith Hill as a rural adjunct to the more developed areas on the East Side and on the Weybosset Side (now downtown) began to reach an end in the mid-nineteenth century. During the next hundred years, approximately from 1830 to 1930, Smith Hill was transformed into the dense urban neighborhood it is today. Two major factors effected this growth: industrialization and immigration.



SUFFRAGE MEETING ON JEFFERSON PLAIN, APRIL 17TH.

Fig. 10: Suffrage Meeting on Jefferson Plain, April 17th; woodcut, ca 1842. Drawn from the vantage point on the bluffs on the north side of the Cove, this view shows the open field on Smith Hill and Colonel Smith's house in the background.

INDUSTRIALIZATION

Since the earliest settlement in Providence, industrialization has played a geographically peripheral, but important, role in the development of Smith Hill. In the seventeenth century, John Smith's mill not only presaged future industrialization along the Moshassuck River but also established the Smith family in the area. Smith Hill itself never became an industrial area, but it owes much of its development to the nineteenth-century industrialization along its borders.

While small industries had grown up in Providence in the eighteenth century, these were strictly ancillary to the shipping trade that supported Providence during these years. The Embargo of 1807 and the War of 1812 severely injured Rhode Island's maritime economy, and the state turned to industry as a means of continuing prosperity. In these years of growth, factories were located near the source of power afforded by the rivers. Early industrial enterprises in Providence were located along the Moshassuck River near Randall Square and on the Woonasquatucket near Olneyville. Both locations had been used for mills in the eighteenth century, and nineteenth-century industrialization spread along the rivers from these points.

Concurrent with and important to this industrialization was the growth of the railroad. By the late 1840s, Providence was connected by rail with Stonington and New York to the south and with Boston to the north, but because of the wide rivers which converged in the Great Salt Cove at Providence's center, through service was impracticable. By the mid-1840s, work had begun to fill a portion of the Great Salt Cove for the creation of the Cove Basin; land claimed on the southern side of the Cove Basin became the site of the first Union Station, completed in 1848. Thus the tracks which now run along the Woonasquatucket and Moshassuck Rivers on the edges of Smith Hill formed a direct rail link from Boston to New York via Providence. The proximity of the railroad not only encouraged incipient industrialization along the rivers, but also spurred residential development on Smith Hill for the many workers associated with the railroads and industry.

By the 1830s large, new industries were crowding into the old eighteenth-century manufacturing center

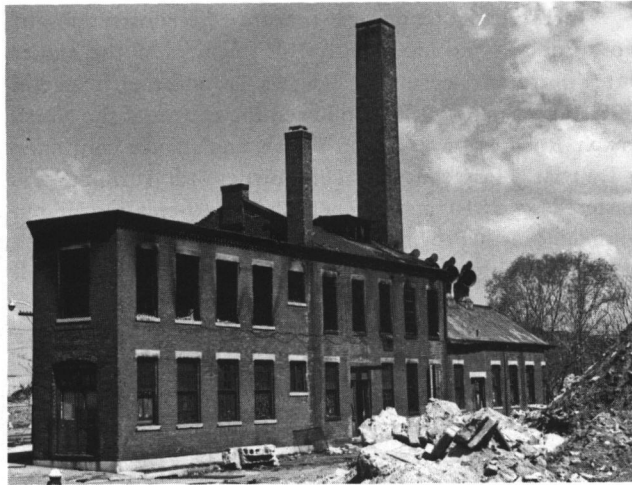


Fig. 11: Stillman White Foundry (1856 et seq.); 1 Bark Street.

along the Moshassuck River near Charles Street. Among these manufacturing enterprises at the eastern edge of Smith Hill were the Franklin Furnace Company, which had located on the Moshassuck River by 1836; Providence Screw Company—later American Screw Company—founded in 1838; Fletcher Manufacturing Company, located on Charles Street in 1840; and the extant Stillman White Foundry, dating from 1856.

Although water continued as an energy source well into the nineteenth century, by the mid-1850s steam power had assumed the primacy it would retain throughout the rest of the nineteenth century. The harnessing of steam power for industrial use made practicable the rapid industrial growth that began in the years just before the Civil War.

The decade 1860-1870 was a period of tremendous industrial growth around Smith Hill, as remaining sites along the rivers filled with factories which thrived particularly as support for the Union effort in the Civil War. Firms such as Burnside Rifle Company and Providence Tool Company manufactured weapons, and many uniforms were made in Providence from Rhode Island textiles. One of the first major manufacturers of cotton goods located in Smith Hill in 1860. The Oriental Mill



Fig. 12: Oriental Mill (1861 et seq.); corner of Admiral and Whipple Streets.

complex at the corner of Whipple and Admiral Streets, remained an important part of the Rhode Island textile industry into the twentieth century. One of the few industrial complexes located within Smith Hill, the Oriental Mill, like peripheral industry, aided the residential growth of Smith Hill, as many of its workers lived in nearby cottages.

The advent of the railroad made the undeveloped, eastern end of the Woonasquatucket River Valley particularly attractive for industrial development; adjacent to the river, to the central business district, and to a major east-coast transportation link, the area drew a number of new industries as well as established enterprises seeking better locations.

The earliest of those to have a direct impact on Smith Hill was the Burnside Rifle Works, named after Providence's famous Civil War general and founded in 1862 as a munitions factory at the corner of Valley and Hemlock Streets. The factory offered work to some residents of Smith Hill but employed more after the company was reorganized as Rhode Island Locomotive Company in 1865 and built the Burnside Row of cottages on Zone Street later in the decade.

Two major Providence factories followed the Burnside Rifle Works to the Woonasquatucket Valley in 1864. The Nicholson File Company (established 1858) moved from quarters downtown to enlarged facilities at Kinsley and Acorn Streets, where it remained until the mid-twentieth century. William Harris, manufacturer of the Harris-Corliss steam engine, opened his machine shop at the corner of Promenade and Park Streets, where it remained into the twentieth century.

In 1870, the nationally prominent Brown and Sharpe Company moved into the first building of its complex at Promenade and Holden Streets, immediately adjacent to the Harris Machine Works. The company, founded in 1833, had developed several important products, such as the vernier caliper (1851), while located in its original quarters on South Main Street. Following its move to Smith Hill, Brown and Sharpe broadened its product line to include such major developments as the Brown and Sharpe Screw Machine, the micrometer caliper, the Universal Milling Machine, and a formed-tooth gear cutter which made possible the mass production of gears. The company continuously expanded its plant to facilitate its increased production, and by the beginning of this century, Brown and Sharpe, whose complex occupied several city blocks, had become the largest single employer of Smith Hill residents. The company's removal to North Kingstown in 1965 was as significant to the decline of Smith Hill as its arrival in 1870 had been to the growth of the area.

Industrial growth along both the Woonasquatucket and Moshassuck Rivers continued apace throughout the nineteenth century and into the third decade of the twentieth century. Those factories established in the 1860s and 1870s grew, and new plants opened such as the Merchants' Cold Storage Warehouse (1893, with additions in 1896 and 1910); the Providence Produce Market (1928); Congdon and Carpenter (1930); and the Coca Cola Bottling Company, first on Smith Street (1917) and later on Pleasant Valley Parkway (1939).

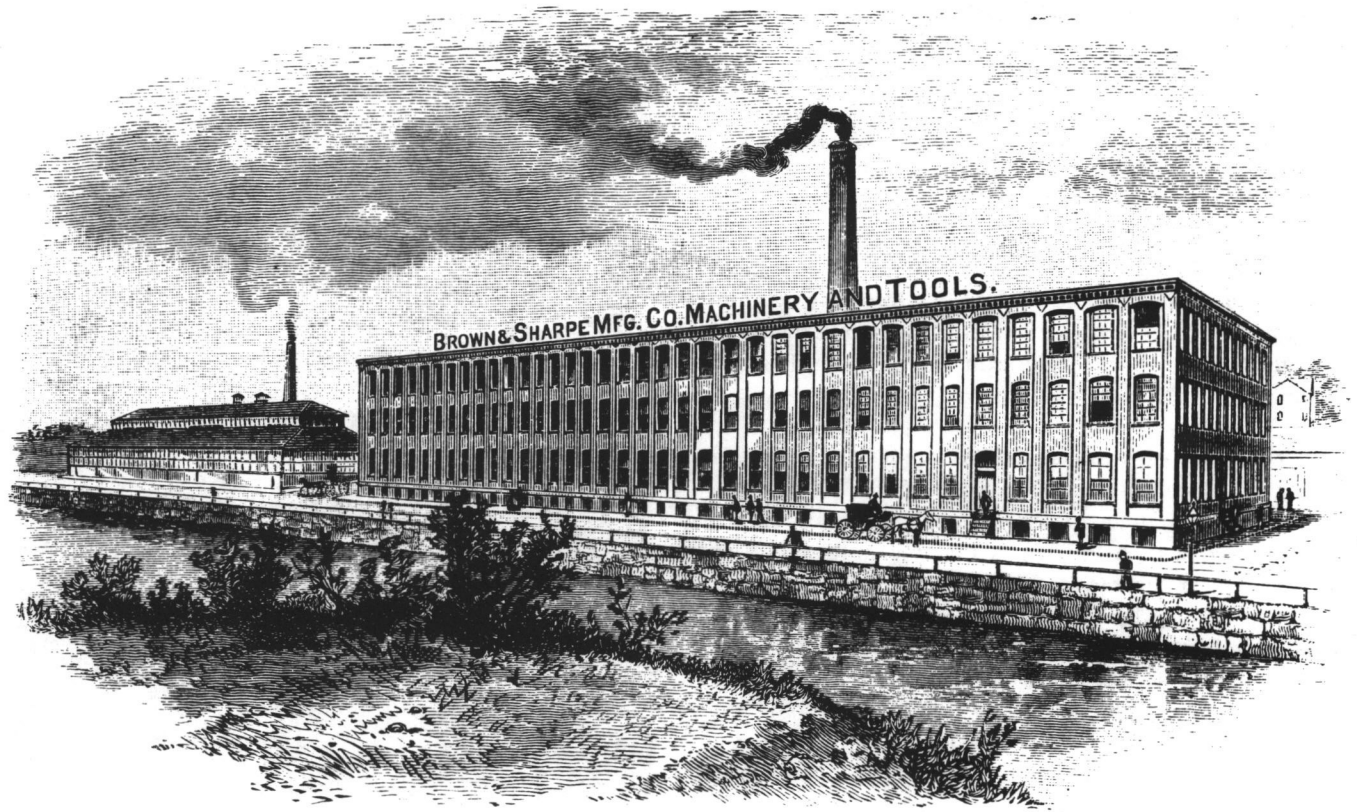


Fig. 13: Brown & Sharpe Complex (1870 et seq.); Promenade at Holden Street; engraving, 1886.



Fig. 14: Merchants Cold Storage Warehouse (1893 et seq.); 160 Kinsley Avenue.



Fig. 15: Coca-Cola Bottling Plant (1939); 95 Pleasant Valley Parkway.

IMMIGRATION AND THE GROWTH OF AN ETHNIC NEIGHBORHOOD

Nineteenth-century industrialization was signally supported by and—at the same time—attracted a large part of the immigrant population that began to arrive in Providence by the 1820s. The rapid growth of Smith Hill was fundamentally due to the arrival first of Irish and later in the century of Eastern Europeans and Balkans. These groups contributed significantly to Smith Hill's form and development, both the densely built residential areas and the many institutions that became significant landmarks in the community.

Until the early nineteenth century, Providence was settled almost exclusively by persons of English ancestry. On Smith Hill, middle- and upper-middle-class businessmen and professionals first settled in the area north and west of the Cove in the early and middle nineteenth century. Beginning in the late 1840s, three Protestant congregations—two Baptist and one Episcopal—were established here. As the area changed in composition and the Protestants moved away these churches closed, and only the former Jefferson Street Baptist Church, now Saints Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church, remains from this early Protestant development.

In the early 1820s, a small group of Irish immigrants were involved in the construction of the Blackstone Canal, and by the 1830s a sufficient number of Roman Catholics lived in Providence to constitute the city's first parish, Saints Peter and Paul, which moved several times before its first permanent home was completed in 1838; it became the seat of the Bishop of Providence in 1872.

The first large wave of immigrants were driven from Ireland in the 1840s by the Great Potato Famine, which killed a million persons over a five-year period and drove a million and a half more from their country. While some of the Irish immigrants continued west to less densely populated areas, many stayed in major port cities on the east coast, in New York, Boston, and Providence.

Early in 1841 a political split developed between the Reverend John Corry, pastor of Saints Peter and Paul, and a group within the parish, the Friends of Ireland, led by



Fig. 16: St. Patrick's Church (1842); formerly on State Street.

Patrick O'Connell, Hugh Duff, and John McCarthy. On 24 February 1841 the Friends of Ireland wrote to Bishop Fenwick in Boston asking permission to form a second Roman Catholic parish in Providence; and the Bishop agreed the following month.

The committee on buying land for the church examined several alternatives. Possible sites in downtown Providence or on the East Side proved too expensive for the fledgling parish. The site chosen for the new church, Saint Patrick's, on Smith Street at the crest of the hill overlooking the Cove, was selected because the committee "had seen no situation so desirable—either as regards respectability or central location."

The cornerstone for the Gothic Revival structure, designed by the prominent Rhode Island architect Russell Warren, was laid 13 July 1841, and the church, which seated 1250 persons, was dedicated 3 July 1842. The size of the building is indicative of the potential size of the parish, and its further activities manifest the impact that it would have on the area. In 1843, the parish began construction of a school building, and the same year the Reverend William Wiley, the first pastor, bought eight acres of land at the corner of Douglas Avenue and Chad Brown Streets for a parish cemetery. Thus, Saint Patrick's was well established on Smith Hill by the time the Great Potato Famine in Ireland would drive hundreds of thousands of persons across the Atlantic in the 1840s, and parish records indicate a rapid growth: baptisms increased from 69 in 1841 to 326 in 1850.

The presence of the church on Smith Hill near growing industry and inexpensive housing encouraged Irish settlement in Smith Hill. The majority of the early Irish immigrants, many of them unskilled laborers, lived on the fringes of Smith Hill, settling in small, crowded dwellings—some mere shanties, others single-family houses converted into tenements—at the foot of the Jefferson Plains—just north of the Cove Basin—and around the Randall Square area. As individuals acquired skills and greater economic success, they tended to build or to move to more comfortable dwellings away from these slum areas.

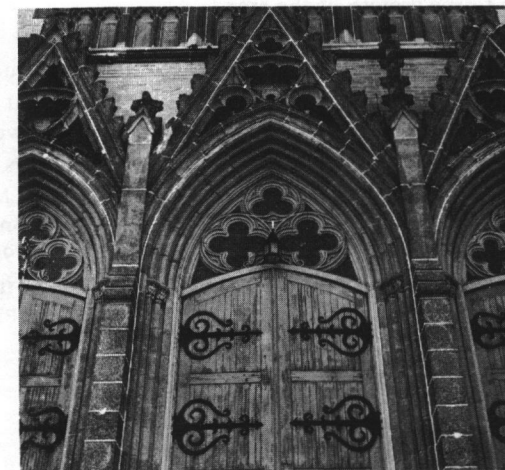


Fig. 17: St. Patrick's Church (1916); formerly on Smith Street; detail of entrance.

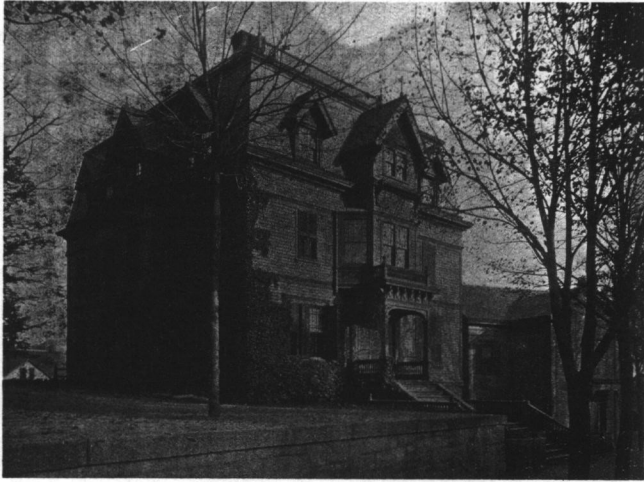


Fig. 18: Convent of the Sisters of Mercy (1872); formerly on Smith Street.

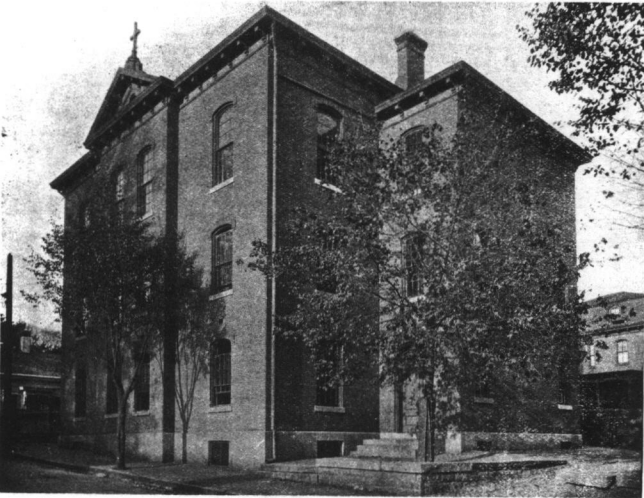


Fig. 19: St Patrick's School (1871); 19 Davis Street.

During the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Irish community and Saint Patrick's continued to grow. Expanding industry provided a constant source of employment to the proliferating Irish, and the church continued to expand both in parishioners and physical plant. The rectory on State Street (1860) was followed by the school on Davis Street (1871) and the Convent for the Sisters of Mercy (completed the following year, moved to Smith Street ca 1902, and demolished in 1979).

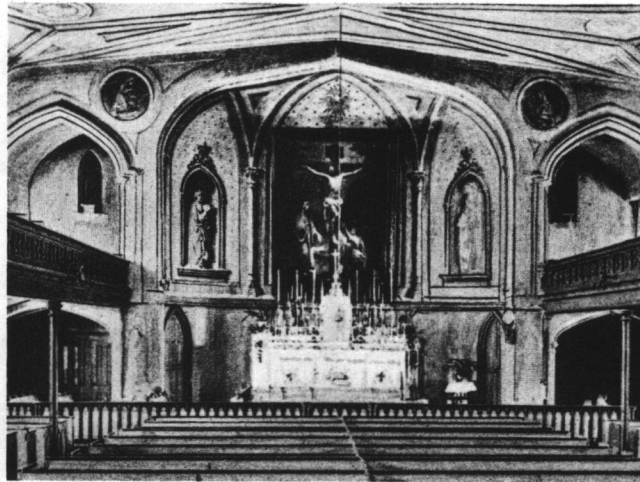


Fig. 20: St Patrick's Church (1842); formerly on Smith Street; detail of interior. The focal point of the high altar at St Patrick's in both the 1842 and the 1916 structures was the painting of the Crucifixion, by Gagliardi, executed for the parish in Rome and paid for by parish subscription. The painting was installed behind the high altar early in 1845.

By 1910 Smith Hill was well established as an Irish neighborhood. Many residents were immigrants or their descendants and began to dominate important neighborhood institutions, such as public schools, police and fire stations, and political associations. Approximately half of the teachers, policemen, and firemen on Smith Hill in 1910 were Irish.

Other ethnic groups began to settle in Smith Hill toward the end of the nineteenth century. Several of these continue to retain ties to the area; others have left.

The first of this second wave of immigrants were Jews who came between 1890 and 1920 largely because of increased persecution by the Russian government. A small group of Jewish immigrants had come to Providence from Germany beginning in the 1840s and settled along the eastern border of Smith Hill. By 1877 only three of the one hundred fifty Jewish families in Providence lived in the neighborhood. The immigration of Russian Jews changed the situation; there were 20 families in the mid-1880s, 88 in 1890, and 208 in 1910.



Fig. 21: Congregation of the Sons of Jacob (1920); 24 Douglas Avenue. The opening of this synagogue was greeted with much fanfare, including long processions and days-long festivities involving the whole congregation.

Most of these immigrants located at the eastern end of Chalkstone Avenue around Lopez, Kane, and Rebecca Streets in an older, poorer section near the railroad tracks and Moshassuck River industry. The Irish who had come to this area in the 1840s were by then moving to more comfortable dwellings farther west as they achieved some prosperity as new areas were developed.

The Jewish presence in the eastern part of Smith Hill was almost immediately reinforced by the creation of several synagogues. The earliest in the area were the Congregation of the Sons of Zion (1892) on Orms Street and the Society of Russian Jews (1896) on Chalkstone Avenue; neither remains.

In 1906, the Congregation of the Sons of Jacob, largely Russian, occupied the first story of their new house of worship at 24 Douglas Avenue. The building was enlarged in 1912, and the superstructure finally completed in 1920. It is the only remaining testimony of the once large Jewish community in the eastern part of Smith Hill.



Fig. 22: Jefferson Street Baptist Church, now Saints Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church (1868); 60 Jefferson Street.



Fig. 23: Gloria Dei Lutheran Church (1928); 15 Hayes Street.

After 1890, domination, oppression, and—ultimately—massacres at the hands of the Turks forced many Armenians, like the Russian Jews, to flee their homeland. They joined a small group of their compatriots who already lived in the eastern part of Smith Hill in modest dwellings along Orms Street and Douglas Avenue. This settlement created the nucleus of the Armenian community that remains on Smith Hill today, and its rapid growth and consolidation is exemplified by the growth of the neighborhood church.

For the growing number of exiled Armenians, the church was the only institution that remained to perpetuate

ate their culture. Thus the need became acute for a place of worship and a community center. In 1913, the congregation was able to purchase the facilities of the Jefferson Street Baptist Church, a simple Victorian Gothic structure, and dedicated it as Saints Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church the following year, obtaining a permanent foothold on Irish-dominated Smith Hill.

While the Armenians established a permanent settlement on Smith Hill and have remained in the area as a distinct ethnic force, the Swedes, who settled in the area beginning in the 1880s, have largely dispersed. Because of the droughts that plagued the country in the late nineteenth

century, Swedes emigrated in large numbers in the 1880s. Those who remained in Providence—rather than moving farther west like many of their compatriots—formed Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in 1890 and erected its first sanctuary on Hayes Street. The congregation expanded rapidly, and by the mid-1920s was able to begin construction on the present edifice, which incorporates traditional Scandinavian motifs with contemporarily popular Art Deco forms. The growth of the state government and the construction of Interstate Highway 95 have displaced many communicants from the immediate neighborhood, but the congregation remains strong and active, drawing from a wide geographical area.

LAND DEVELOPMENT

The transformation of Smith Hill from a sparsely populated rural adjunct at the beginning of the nineteenth century to a congested residential neighborhood by 1920 was effected through the division into house lots of large tracts of land originally used as farms or suburban retreats. While the building boom which rapidly changed the face of Smith Hill began only in the late 1870s, the first intensive land speculation and urban development had commenced in the 1830s.

The first major plat of house lots was offered for sale by Jesse Metcalf as the Smith Hill Plat of 1830, an area of approximately seventy house lots north of Smith Street and west of Davis Street, including Jefferson Street and part of Holden Street. The popularity of this area is evinced by the number of dwellings erected by the 1850s, some fifty-five in all—very few survive. The plat's proximity both to the older residential neighborhood on the East Side and to the central business district, its relatively inexpensive land, and the growth of Irish immigration in the 1840s account for its early success. The early residents of the Smith Hill Plat were generally prosperous members of the middle class. Many were involved in mercantile pursuits or held minor managerial positions in the developing industrial economy. Nelson C. Northup, whose house still stands at 17 Jefferson Street, is typical of the early residents: long involved in the grocery business, he prospered and eventually went into real-estate speculation. John B. Hennessey, an Irish immigrant who also achieved success as a grocer, built the spacious house for his large family at 19 Mulberry Street.

A second, smaller plat of house lots on Smith Hill was offered for sale by David Burt and Albert H. Snow in 1843 along Holden Street between Smith and Orms Streets. A handful of structures were built on this plat, but these have been almost entirely replaced by subsequent development. Still remaining is the dwelling at 216 Orms Street, built by Amos D. Yeomans in 1845.

Both the Edward A. Bush Plat, north of the intersection of Chalkstone and Douglas Avenues, and the Philip W. Martin Estate Plat, west of the intersection of Chalkstone and Charles Street, opened in 1843. They were dense-

ly built by 1857, but subsequent industrialization and urban renewal have eliminated the small dwellings from these areas.

In 1847, the Allen family first divided the large area bounded by Smith Street, Orms Street, Douglas Avenue, and Chalkstone Avenue into house lots. Because of its isolation from more densely settled parts of Providence, little building activity occurred before the Civil War, although near the corner of Chalkstone and Douglas Avenues stood a small cluster of pre-1860 houses, most of which were demolished in the 1960s.

Following his death in 1850, Thomas Randall Holden's Smith Hill estate was divided among his heirs and platted into house lots. While at least two of his heirs built investment properties on their land (27-29 and 44 Jewett Street), most of the land was sold for house lots, and a number of large, stylish residences was constructed. When the Holden Estate was divided, the land to its west was largely undeveloped, and the Woonasquatucket River was free of industry. The area thus offered an almost rural setting and proximity to the growing central business district. This combination proved attractive to prosperous members of the business community who wanted more spacious surroundings than those available close to downtown on the East Side. By the Civil War, a number of substantial houses had been built on both sides of Park Street and on the cross streets between Park and Holden Streets, including the William G. R. Mowry House (1856) at 57 Brownell Street and the Christopher G. Dodge House (1858) at 11 Westpark Street.

The westernmost pre-Civil War settlement occurred on the A. C. Hawes & Brother Plat of 1854. Soon after the thirty-five lots bounded by Orms, Smith, and Duke Streets were offered for sale, a number of dwellings were erected on or moved to this area. Many of these are extant, including the Sheffield Smith House (1855) at 334 Smith Street and the mid-eighteenth-century house moved by Patrick Denahy to 10 Esten Street around 1857.

The Hardenburg Purchase Plat of 1856 was less immediately successful as a new development, probably because of the relative remoteness of its western location: north of the intersection of Chalkstone Avenue and Smith



Fig. 24: Map showing development of Smith Hill before 1860; dates on parcels indicate the opening of these areas and platting into house lots.

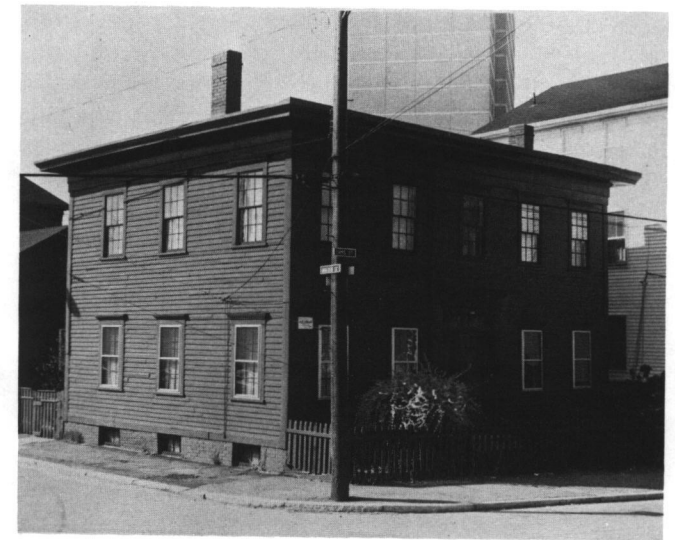


Fig. 25: Yeomans-Oldfield House (1845); 216 Orms Street.

Street, along Camden, Danforth, and Clara Streets. At least one of the early dwellings on the Hardenburg Plat remains: the Erastus N. Steere House (1856), built by the developer of the area, still stands, though heavily altered, at 511 Chalkstone Avenue.

Between 1860 and 1890, real-estate development expanded as growing industry and immigration placed increasing demands upon the area for housing, and numerous plats were opened for sale of house lots. These major plats include: a further division of the Allen Estate of 1847 and a division of Allen family land south of Smith Street along Calverly Street in 1861; the Thomas Davis and George L. Clarke Plat bounded by Candace Street and Douglas and Chalkstone Avenues in 1861; the Oaklands Estate Plat of Sarah B. Eaton, a division of the Eaton family estate which lay east of River Avenue and west of the Hardenburg Purchase Plat, divided into several plats offered for sale beginning in 1871; the Douglas and Hardenburg Plat, bounded by Douglas Avenue and Camden and Vale Streets, in 1871; the Second Davis and Clarke Plat, bounded by Alma, Pekin, and Candace Streets and Douglas Avenue, in 1872; the Thomas Davis Plat, west of Holden Street, south of Jewett Street, in 1879; and the Phoebe Young Heirs Plat, bounded by Smith and Young Streets and Chalkstone Avenue, in 1885.

Most of these areas filled with small cottages or—increasingly toward the end of the century—multiple-family dwellings. The one exception was the Oaklands Estate Plat, which was sufficiently far removed from the densely populated areas when first platted that it became the site of several comfortable single-family dwellings; however, as the population grew, westward expansion on Smith Hill brought many multiple-family dwellings.

The last plats opened for residential development are along the western edge of Smith Hill. The Mason and Okie Plat—bounded by Chalkstone Avenue, Pleasant Valley Parkway, Valley Street, and Zone Street—was divided into house lots which were first offered for sale in 1887; small lots lined these streets and two new streets opened at this time, Ayrault and Felix. Frank Waterman surveyed and platted the last remaining portion of the Pinckney Farm into house lots in 1905. This tract comprised the land south of Orms Street, west of the inter-

section of Orms and Smith Streets, and north of Okie Street. Both of these areas had filled with multiple-family dwellings by 1925.

Nineteenth-century westward expansion of the neighborhood was facilitated by the development of public transportation. The first horsecars began operation in Providence in 1864, and by the early 1880s, Smith Hill was served by routes along Chalkstone Avenue and Smith Street. By 1900, horsecars had been replaced by trolleys, and routes had been added on Charles and Admiral Streets and Douglas Avenue, providing service on most major thoroughfares through the neighborhood.



Fig. 26: Charles Dowler House (1872); 581 Smith Street. This mansard-roof dwelling is a typical 1870s form. Few houses of this type and quality remain in the city today in such a well-preserved state.

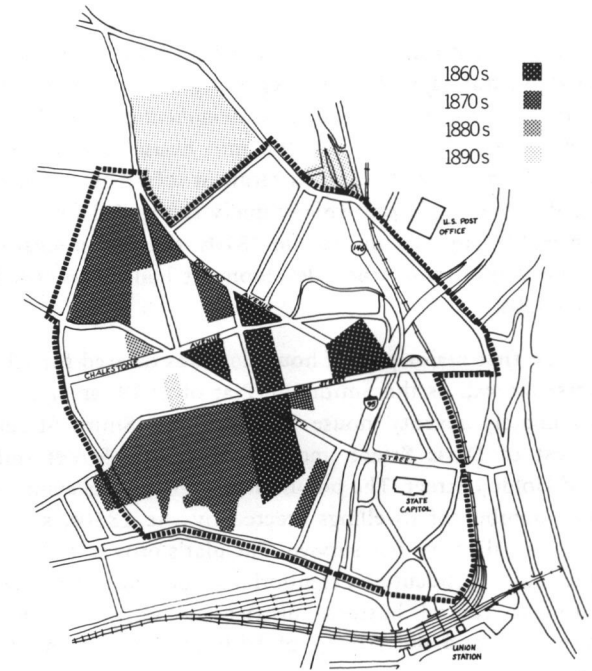


Fig. 27: Map showing development of Smith Hill between 1860 and 1890; dates on parcels indicate the opening of these areas and plating into house lots.



Fig. 28: Niles B. Schubarth House I (1872); 49 Common Street. The interior organization of this type changed little in the nineteenth century, but here a modish mansard roof bespoke modernity.

ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The rapid nineteenth- and early twentieth-century growth of Smith Hill is best seen in the homogeneity of its architecture. Little was built before 1800, and only two eighteenth-century houses remain. Several fine examples of mid-nineteenth-century architectural styles survive, representing the first urbanization of the neighborhood. The majority of the structures on Smith Hill are multiple-family dwellings built between 1875 and 1925, and these buildings amply represent the evolution of common southern New England urban house types.

When Smith Hill first began to grow in the late 1830s, Providence architecture had entered a late Federal phase. The simple, vernacular, single-family houses erected then, such as the small house at 60 Davis Street, have all the earmarks of the style, including delicacy of proportion and trim, an elliptical fanlight over the doorway, and a hip roof with monitor.

By the 1840s the taste for Greek Revival had superseded the Federal. Based on the architecture of ancient Greece, the style introduced more massive detailing and proportions to American architecture. The use of a portico temple front with columns the height of the building—the hallmark of the style—was rare in Providence where most of these houses used a Greek-inspired entrance porch and wide pilasters instead of cornerboards. Few such houses remain on Smith Hill, but they illustrate typical Providence vernacular forms, such as the two-and-a-half-story Jonathan Tucker House (ca 1850) at 206 Smith Street or the smaller story-and-a-half Horace Crossman House (ca 1847) at 162 Orms Street.

After 1850, the Italianate style, loosely derived from the architecture of the Italian Renaissance, began to replace the Greek Revival. There was, however, a fairly long transitional period, during which Greek Revival houses were dressed up in the latest Italianate trim. The Nelson C. Northup House (1853) at 17 Jefferson Street is a fine, well preserved example of this transitional mode: the solid two-and-a-half-story block, set gable end to the street on a high granite basement, retains the form of the Greek Revival, but quoins replace the corner pilasters, a monumental hood with pendants crowns the doorway, massive



Fig. 29: House (ca 1830 et seq.); 60 Davis Street. The portion at left is part of the original monitor-on-hip-roof section.



Fig. 30: House (ca 1830 et seq.); 60 Davis Street. Front elevation, showing addition at left.



Fig. 31: Jonathan Tucker House (ca 1851); 206 Smith Street. Alterations in the late 19th century included shingling that covers the corner boards.

brackets decorate the raking and eaves cornices, and an octagonal cupola dominates the roof. The finest exemplar of its type in Providence, it has been approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

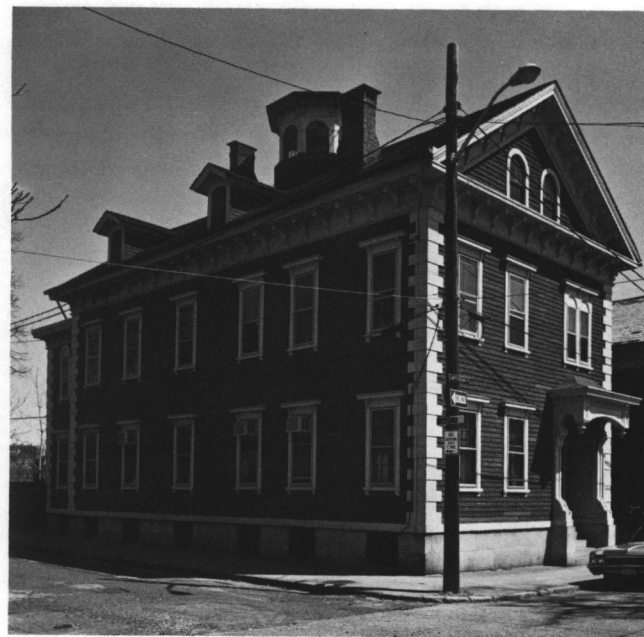


Fig. 32: Nelson C. Northup House (1853); 17 Jefferson Street.

At the time some builders were combining elements of the Greek Revival and Italianate styles in their buildings, fully developed Italianate houses were beginning to rise on Smith Hill. These were chiefly two types: the palazzo and



Fig. 33: Christopher Dodge House (1858); 11 West Park Street.

the villa style. The forms of both the John G. Hennessey House (ca 1855) at 19 Mulberry Street and the Christopher G. Dodge House (1858) at 11 Westpark Street approach that of the monumental Italian Renaissance palazzo, cubical in massing and crowned with a low hip roof with wide eaves. The Dodge House, the most impressive Italianate dwelling on Smith Hill, sits on a high granite basement, with its central entrance reached by twin staircases. The Mowry-Nicholson House (1856) was built in the villa style: its picturesque cruciform plan and broad verandas were eminently suited to the semirural site on the hillside overlooking the Woonasquatucket River. The integration of design and location clearly followed the tenets of Andrew Jackson Downing, the prominent mid-nineteenth-century theoretician and architect, as expressed in *The Architecture of Country Houses* (1850). Modified by William T. Nicholson in the 1860s and 1870s, the house reflects changing demands of both style and function in what was by then becoming an urban area adjacent to incipient industry along the river.

These large, stylish houses were complemented on Smith Hill by a number of modest, vernacular types. While many of these early dwellings have disappeared, several remain as examples of lower- and middle-class hous-



Fig. 34: Mowry-Nicholson House (1856 et seq.); 57 Brownell Street.

ing. The Charles G. Arnold House, built between 1849 and 1855 at 55 Bernon Street, is a simple residence used as an investment property, typical of the extremely plain, speculatively built cottages. The Patrick Shanley House (ca 1860) at 65 Bernon Street employs a standard nineteenth-century format for vernacular dwellings in Providence: two-and-a-half stories, gable roof set end to the street, and a three-bay facade with side-hall plan. Shanley, a

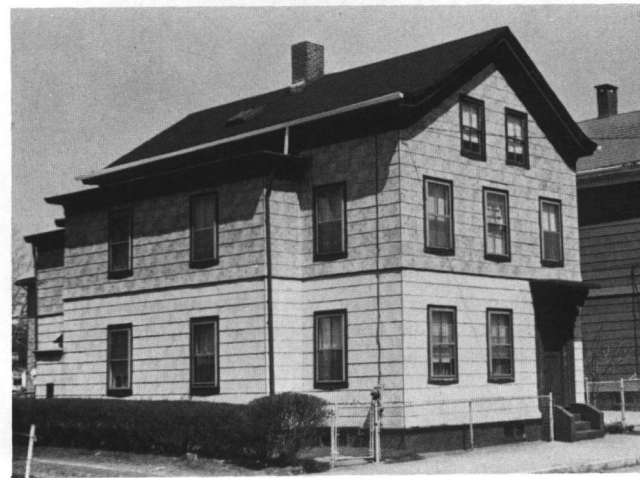


Fig. 35: Patrick Shanley House (ca 1860); 65 Bernon Street.

carpenter, was probably involved in the construction of his house, and the flaring roof line may reflect his handiwork. Joseph Baker's one-and-a-half-story, center-entrance house (ca 1864) at 37 Bernon Street relies on a standard early nineteenth-century format but is embellished by round-head recessed panels in the corner pilasters and fine bracketed detailing in the bay windows that flank the hooded center entrance.

During the 1860s, the Italianate style gave way to a vogue for architecture emulating that of contemporary France during the reign of Emperor Napoleon III. The Second Empire Style, like the preceding Italianate phase, made use of a monumental building block articulated with boldly modeled, classically derived, decorative elements; but its primary characteristic is the mansard roof. The Second Empire Style survived into the late 1870s as a high-style form and lingered into the 1880s and 1890s in vernacular, two-family dwellings.

Perhaps the most splendid of the Second Empire houses on Smith Hill is that built by Niles Bierragaard Schubarth, the prominent Providence landscape architect, at 47 Common Street in 1874. The central entrance is emphasized by the sunbonnet dormer in the mansard and flanked by two-story bay windows. The original granite steps and wrought-iron fence remain of the original landscaping treatment.

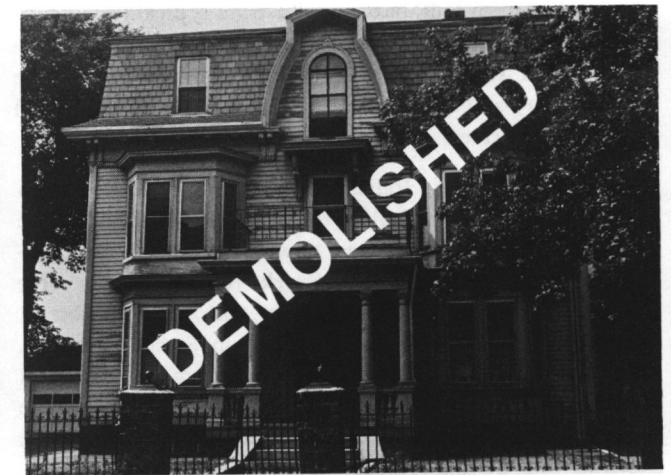


Fig. 36: Niles B. Schubarth House II (1874); 49 Common Street; demolished, 1980.



Fig. 37: Dickhaut Heirs Cottages (ca 1897); 6-18 Duke Street.

The usefulness of the Second Empire's mansard roof, which allowed a full third story in the attic space, made it attractive in multiple-family dwellings of the 1880s; but the relatively great expense of framing a mansard roof, rather than a simple gable, limited its popularity on the mass-housing market.

The character of Smith Hill as a working-class neighborhood was fully established in the post-Civil War years. To accommodate the rapidly growing population, a large number of dwellings were constructed. The Smith Hill building boom was noted in an 1883 *Providence Journal* article:

The Tenth Ward [part of Smith Hill] continues to grow more rapidly than any other section of the city. In this ward both the amount invested and the number of buildings erected are larger than in any other of the nine wards.*

**Providence Journal*, 1 January 1883

Many of these were constructed by real-estate developers, but owner-occupied houses—and especially owner-occupied multiple-family dwellings—were also constructed as residents of the area achieved some financial prosperity. New housing during these years took three forms: single-family cottages; two-and-a-half-story, two-family dwellings; and three-deckers.

A number of small, single-family cottages were erected in the late nineteenth century, a continuation of the trend begun before the Civil War. Many were built in groups as rental property by individual developers, and their plain, unadorned cottages show little variety, either among themselves or from group to group. The few owner-occupied cottages were usually embellished with decorative detailing, such as the Robert Arnett House (1871) at 37 Violet Street and the Charles Kelley House (ca 1875) at 51 Camden Avenue.

Four major clusters of small, one-and-a-half-story cottages set gable end to the street were constructed in the last two decades of the nineteenth century by perhaps the heaviest investor in Smith Hill real estate, Andrew

Dickhaut. Dickhaut was a private investor, with no connection with any of the large industrial concerns that employed most of his tenants. The earliest of these workers' cottages were eight built on Fillmore Street in 1881; five of them remain at 39, 47, 55, 57, and 59 Fillmore Street. The best preserved, 39 Fillmore Street, retains the low picket fence typical of the period of construction.

In 1883, Dickhaut completed a group of eleven houses (identical to those on Fillmore Street) from 115 to 141 Bath Street just north of Orms Street. This, the most intact group of workers' cottages from the late nineteenth century remaining in Providence, has been approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Seven buildings, mirror images of those on Bath and Fillmore Streets, were constructed by Dickhaut in 1891 from 55 to 73 Lydia Street. The last group, built by Dickhaut's heirs, rose on Duke Street in 1897. These seven, at 6 through 18 Duke Street, are similar in form to the earlier structures, but differ by the addition of a porch and bay window across the front of the building in place of the simple three-bay facade.



Fig. 38: Charles Kelley House (ca 1875); 51 Camden Avenue.



Fig. 39: Burnside Row (1866-1867); Zone Street.

The frame, two-and-a-half story, two-family house with gable roof set end to the street is a classic and pervasive house type in southern New England cities and very common in Rhode Island; Smith Hill retains a fine collection of these dwellings, the best in Providence. The earliest were simple, with a three-bay facade and minimal decora-

tive trim. Late nineteenth-century architectural trends toward varied massing and picturesque effects are reflected in the larger, later versions of the two-family house: bay windows, larger porches, cross-gable roofs, and turrets were added with increasing frequency in the last two decades of the century.

The earliest of these workers' dwellings on Smith Hill is the Burnside Row, sixteen houses erected on Zone Street in 1868 by the owners of the Rhode Island Locomotive Works (formerly Burnside Rifle Works), which was located nearby on Kinsley Avenue. The corporate involvement was unusual, and the grouping of such a large number of identical units of multi-family housing by a single developer was exceptional on Smith Hill until the rapid proliferation of three-deckers around the turn of the century.

By the early 1880s the pace of Smith Hill development quickened noticeably, and whole blocks of houses—mostly of the two-and-a-half-story, two-family type—rose rapidly as developers sold off house lots on the newly opened plats.

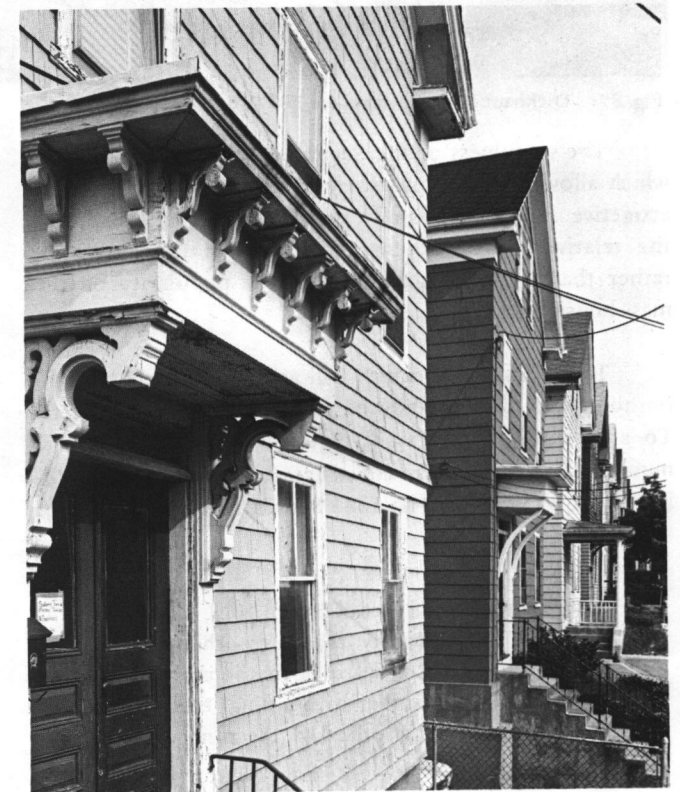


Fig. 40: Burnside Row (1866-1867); Zone Street. Detail of hooded doorway.

Much of the building activity of this period centered in the Second Davis and Clarke Plat, bounded by Douglas Avenue and Pekin, Alma, and Candace Streets. The area retains most of the two-family houses built there in the 1880s: the northern side of Alma Street, for example, contains five identical houses built in 1883, with a sixth added in 1887. The density of the extant urban fabric and its importance to the development of Smith Hill commends this district's nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Toward the end of the 1880s, a larger version of the multi-family house came into fashion on Smith Hill. These houses filled-in lots on streets opened earlier in the century and lined previously undeveloped streets, such as Chalkstone Avenue west of Smith Street. The Elisée J. Bourneuf House (1892), at 660-662 Chalkstone Avenue is typical of these later multi-family houses: a front porch replaces the small stoop, bay windows sprout on the walls of the structure, and the high cross-gable roof provides additional living space.



Fig. 42: Elisée J. Bourneuf House (1891); 660-662 Chalkstone Avenue.



Fig. 41: Alma Street.

Continued population growth abetted by the second wave of immigrants in the late nineteenth century increased the demand for housing on Smith Hill. The three-decker satisfied this demand by using more intensively the remaining vacant land on Smith Hill. A three-story building with one apartment to each floor and front porches extending the height of the building, it proliferated in southern New England cities between 1890 and 1930. While the detailing of the three-decker followed the stylistic vagaries

of local architectural trends over the course of its popularity, its basic form underwent little change, for it is a building type rather than a particular style. In plan, the building follows the format established by the earliest multiple-family house, with rooms arranged in a double-barrel shotgun fashion. Within this basic format, variety was achieved in size, with units ranging from two to four bedrooms.

The three-decker was almost the only type of housing built on the newly opened Mason and Okie and Pinckney Farms Plats, but it was not limited to these areas. Formerly undeveloped lots in more established sections were filled with three-deckers—sometimes two to a lot—during this period; Goddard and Bernon Streets were thus filled.

The construction of three-deckers was almost entirely limited to speculative builders who erected large numbers of them in concentrated areas. This particular approach to real-estate development produced rows of identical three-deckers. In architectural terms, the best

concentration in Providence occurs on Smith Hill along Oakland Avenue and its side streets between Smith and Eaton Streets—here the monumentality of the three-decker is most apparent, in these long rows of closely serried structures. By 1916, the rapidly increasing number of three-deckers filling Providence working-class neighborhoods prompted significant criticism of the type. It offered little however, by way of a realistic solution to the crowded living situation. To recognize the importance of the type to Providence's heritage, the Oakland Avenue Historic District has been approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

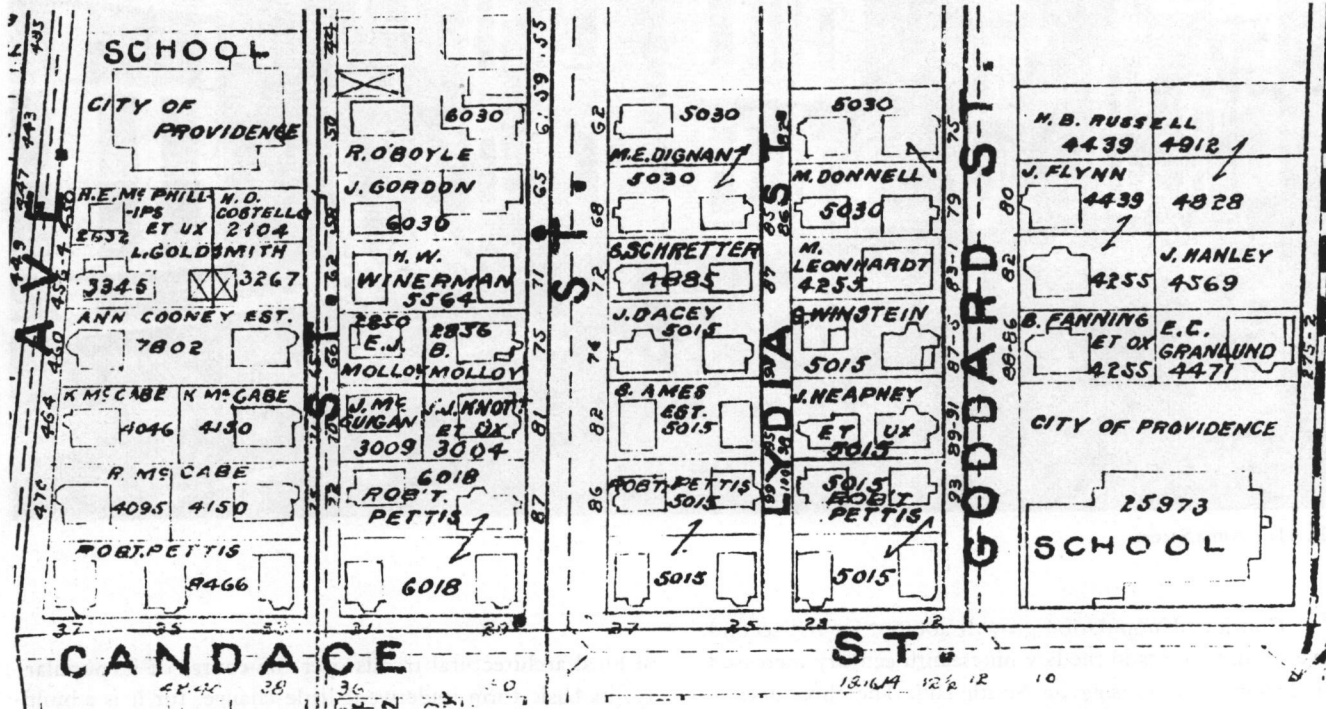


Fig. 43: Goddard and Bernon Streets as shown on the 1908 Street Map of Providence.

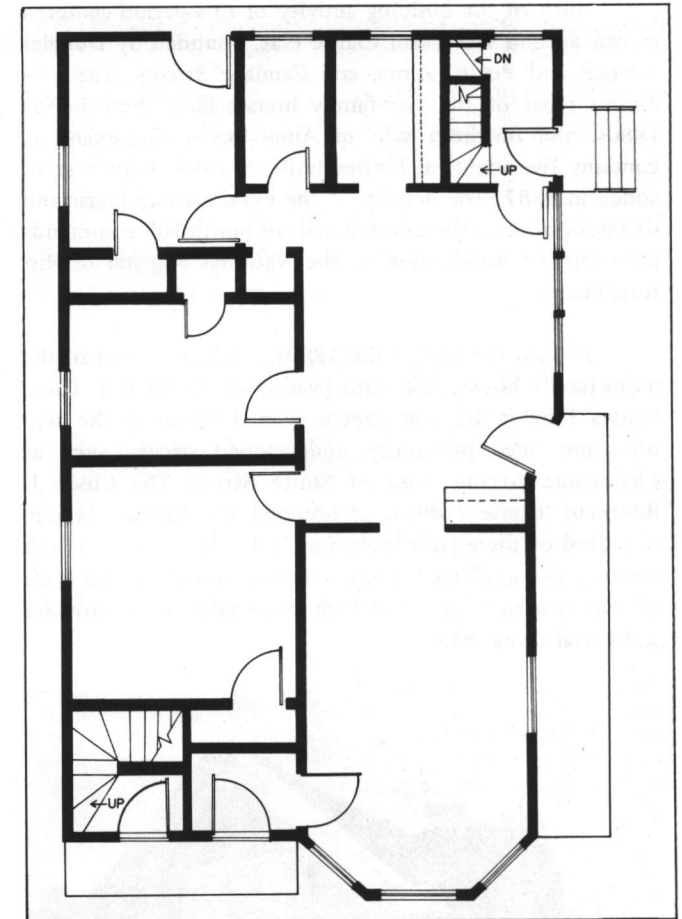


Fig. 44: Typical plan of a triple-decker.



Fig. 45: Triple deckers on Oakland Avenue.



Fig. 46: Candace Street School (1877); formerly at the corner of Candace and Orms Streets; engraving, 1886.

The rapid late nineteenth-century population growth necessitated an increase in city services, and several public schools, fire stations, and police stations were built.

The small wood-frame schoolhouse (erected when the area was part of North Providence) on the south side of Chalkstone Avenue just west of Douglas Avenue had become inadequate by the mid-1870s. In 1877, the City of Providence erected a grammar school (razed in the 1960s)

at the corner of Candace and Smith Streets. The large brick structure, designed in a High Victorian Gothic style by E. L. Angell, provided the first modern public school for the area. The grammar school was soon augmented with Smith Street Primary School at 396 Smith Street. Opened in September of 1885, it is a large, brick structure which reflects the Queen Anne style, loosely based on English seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century forms, then in

vogue for significant buildings. Probably the finest remaining example of Providence's brick schoolhouses of the late nineteenth century, the Smith Street School has been approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. As the population expanded and residential neighborhoods extended farther west, the Ruggles Street Primary School, completed in 1896, was opened to relieve pressure on the Smith Street facility.

Police and fire service were improved on Smith Hill in the 1870s with the construction of the Chalkstone Avenue Police Station in 1874 and the Smith Street Fire Station in 1875; both facilities were later superseded and eventually razed. The 1902 Fire Station, now altered for commercial purposes, still stands on Douglas Avenue, just west of Chalkstone.

Contemporary with the growth of Smith Hill's importance as a residential neighborhood, small commercial enterprises—such as grocers, cobblers, druggists, and butchers—were established to serve the needs of the inhabitants. Many of these early businesses were in mixed-use structures located in the middle of residential areas, such as the Goff Grocery Store (later Remington Drugs) at 147 Smith. The nearby Higgins Florists Shop, like many area businesses, continues in the same location it has maintained since the early years of the twentieth century.

By the early twentieth century, however, neighborhood businesses had begun to consolidate their locations into major shopping nodes at intersections of principal streets like Chalkstone, Orms, and Smith. While some new buildings were erected specifically for commercial use, such as that for the Smith Hill Market (ca 1922) at 543 Chalkstone Avenue, much of the space used for these commercial centers was in altered residential buildings. Early houses were usually raised one story and a modern store was inserted at ground level, but from time to time the first story was simply gutted and completely renovated to suit the new tenant. Several examples of both types of commercial recycling remain at the shopping node at the intersection of Chalkstone Avenue and Smith Street, such as the building at 422 Smith Street, which has undergone renovation since 1977 as the headquarters for the Capitol Hill Interaction Council, a major local organization.



Fig. 48: View west on Douglas Avenue from the intersection of Chalkstone Avenue. The Douglas Avenue Fire Station is at the far right.



Fig. 47: Smith Street Primary School (1885); 396 Smith Street.



Fig. 49: Remington Company's Drug Store (1873); 147 Smith Street; postcard view, ca 1900.

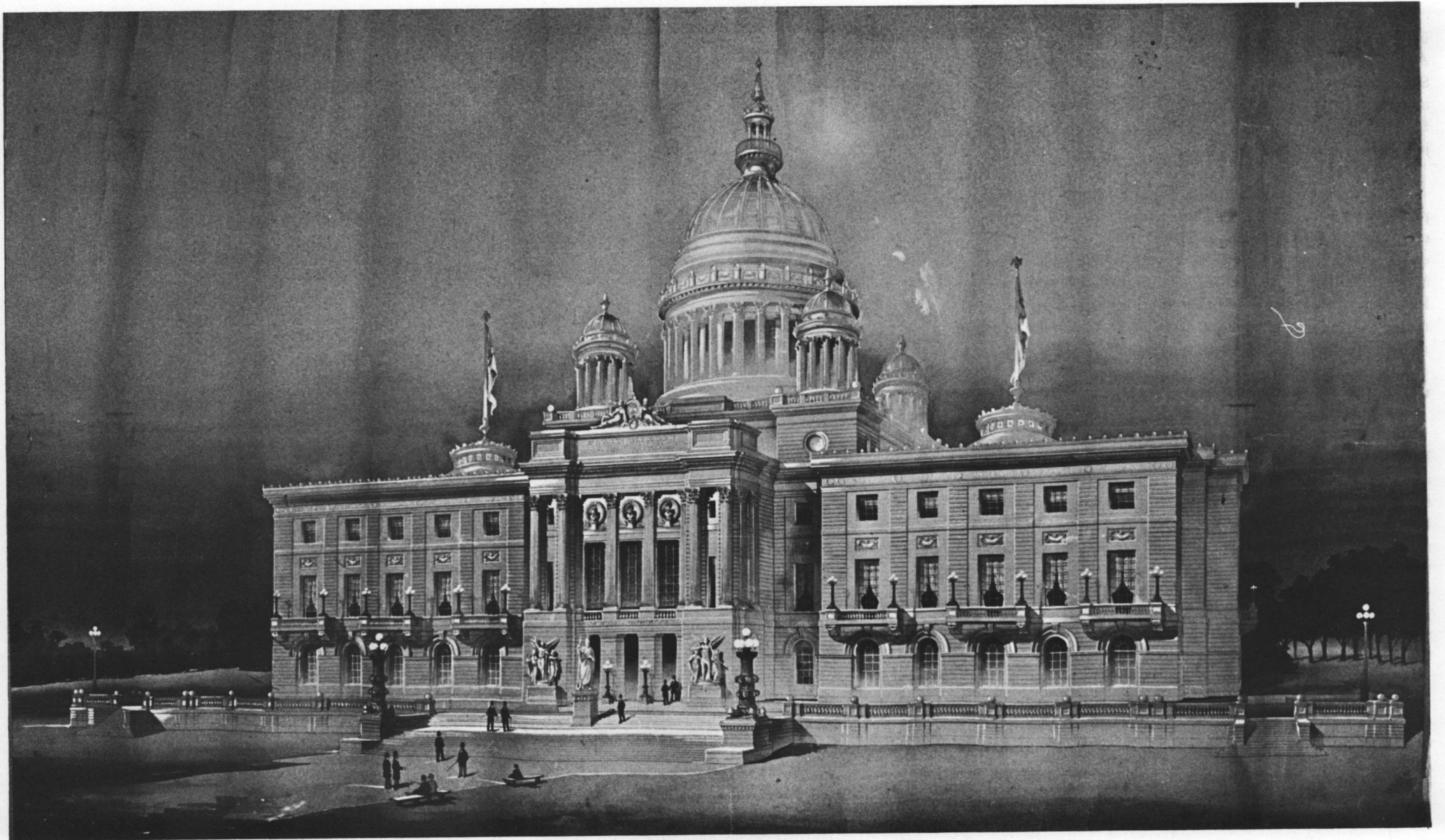


Fig. 50: Rhode Island State House (1895-1904); 90 Smith Street. Rendering by McKim, Mead and White for the State House Competition in 1891.

GOVERNMENT CENTER

Since the time when the Jefferson Plain was used for militia reviews in the early 1800s, the east end of the Smith Hill neighborhood has played host to governmental activities, particularly on the state level. In this century, this quarter has been taken over more and more by the state government until, now, it has become a wholly distinct entity different from the rest of the neighborhood in function and built form and, since 1962, physically set off by Interstate 95. Only the Smith Street and Orms Street bridges join the east end of Smith Hill—once the heart of the neighborhood and the home of St. Patrick's Parish—with the rest of the neighborhood.

As early as the mid-eighteenth century, Smith Hill was the site of the Providence "work house," the early prison facility. Smith Hill was chosen as the site for a state prison which superseded municipal jails in the early nineteenth century. Located at Great Point, on the west shore of the cove near the location of today's Family Court Building, the granite, cruciform-plan, Greek Revival structure remained in use until the present Adult Correctional Institution at Howard opened in Cranston in 1878.

Soon thereafter, the City of Providence decided to fill the Cove Basin (by then a foul, muddy backwater), to create retaining walls for the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers, and to construct a new Union Station on an artificial knoll at the eastern edge of the former Cove Basin. This master plan improved access from the downtown to Smith Hill through the Francis and Gaspee Street underpasses and facilitated the concentration of state offices there; the elevated tracks, however, created a physical barrier which defined the northern limit of the downtown and discouraged development of the area between the Capitol, the railroad, and the Moshassuck River. The area north of the station was designed for and used as a freight yard for many years until the open space was converted to surface parking.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the Old State House, still in government use at 150 Benefit Street, had become too small to accommodate the state government. In 1891 the General Assembly appointed the State House Commission to determine the location and architects of a

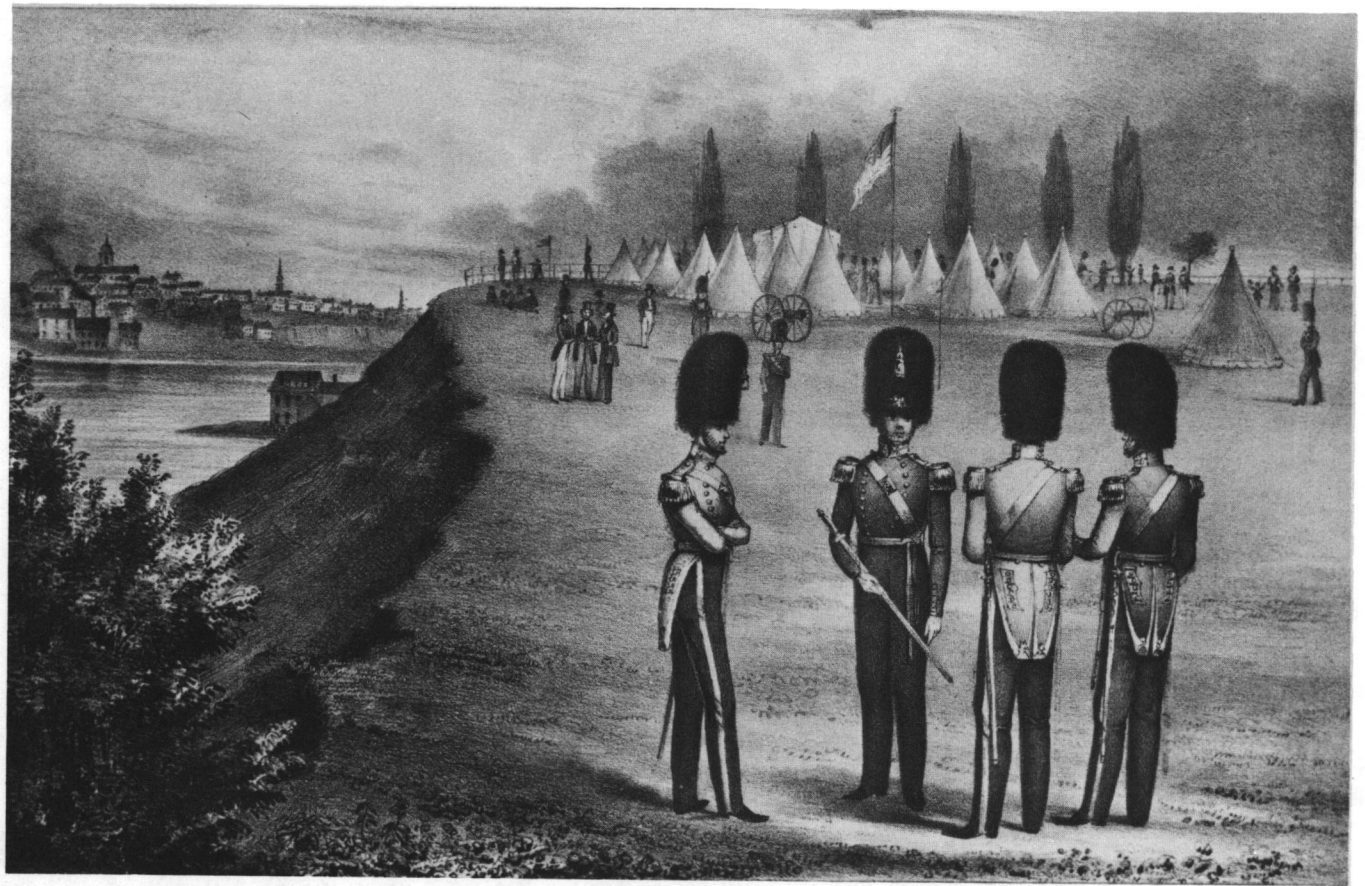


Fig. 51: "Encampment of the Boston City Guards on Smith's Hill, in the Early Forties"; drawing, 19th century.

new capitol. Following the recommendation of the City Public Park Association, the committee chose a sixteen-acre parcel at the crest of Smith Hill opposite Saint Patrick's Church and commanding a magnificent view of downtown Providence. The following year the Commission held a design competition and selected the plans of the nationally prominent New York firm McKim, Mead and White. Construction on the elaborate, white marble, Beaux-Arts edifice was begun in 1896 and completed in 1901.

Soon after construction had begun on the Capitol, the state demolished the old prison—which had remained vacant and seriously deteriorating since 1878—to provide enlarged quarters for the Rhode Island Normal School at the corner of Francis and Gaspee Streets. The large brick-

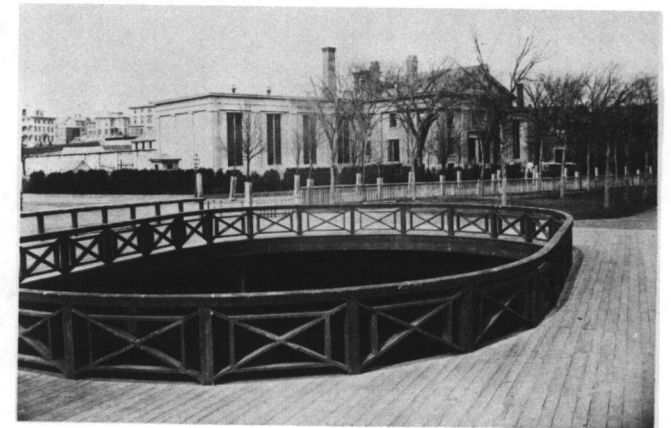


Fig. 52: State Prison (ca 1845); formerly near the intersection of Gaspee and Promenade Streets.



Fig. 53: Competition drawing for the Rhode Island State House (1891); J. C. Cady, architect.



Fig. 54: Competition drawing for the Rhode Island State House (1891); Carrère & Hastings, architect.

and-terra-cotta structure, designed by the Providence firm Martin and Hall, was completed in 1898. The Normal School was enlarged in 1926 by the construction of a second building, the Henry Barnard School, at right angle to the original structure. Rhode Island Normal School, now Rhode Island College, moved to a new campus off Mount Pleasant Avenue in the 1960s, vacating this complex which has since become the Family Court Building and also houses several state agencies.

The burgeoning bureaucracy of twentieth-century government caused further development by the state in the eastern portion of Smith Hill. The State House had become cramped by the early 1920s, and the General Assembly voted in 1924 to purchase the Colonel Henry Smith House (1800) for land to build an adjunct office for the State House. The four-story brick structure with Georgian Revival detailing was built in 1928; the western wing was completed in 1935. In recent years the building has been used primarily to house the Registry of Motor Vehicles.

The other major state-owned building from this

period was initially a private project. Veterans Memorial Auditorium was begun as the Masonic Temple in 1926 to replace quarters downtown. Only the exterior of the large Beaux-Arts structure was complete when the project became financially unfeasible, and construction ceased in 1928. The structure was acquired by the state in 1945 and first opened as an auditorium in 1951. Part of the auditorium wing continues to provide space for cultural events, state offices, and storage, but the eastern portion has remained vacant and only half finished for over fifty years.

By the 1960s, the state again found itself short of sufficient office space. A master plan for the development of a government center, designed by Edward Durell Stone, proposed the demolition of the State Office Building and the construction of a complex of five identical buildings on an axis north of the State House. This consolidation of state agencies was inaugurated by the construction of the health building in the early 1970s, and expansion of the complex is scheduled to occur as land becomes available and resources allow. Realization of this project will effect

the final shift from residential to institutional use of this portion of Smith Hill.

In 1979, the implementation of the Northeast Corridor Improvement Project (NECIP) for railway service and growing private-sector concern for lack of vacant land immediately accessible to the downtown precipitated a plan to relocate the railroad tracks approximately a hundred yards north of its 1890s location and to construct a new station. The Capitol Center Project, unlike the 1960 proposal to move the tracks and station, retains the 1896 Union Station complex—to be rehabilitated for commercial use—but removes the fill used to elevate the tracks on either end of the station and seeks to incorporate the area north of the 1896 station into the central business district. The relocated tracks, which roughly follow the course of Gaspee Street and would be erected at present grade, would be bermed on both sides with landfill and covered in the area near the Capitol Grounds. Extensive environmental assessment and coordination of the parties involved preclude the construction's beginning until at least 1983.

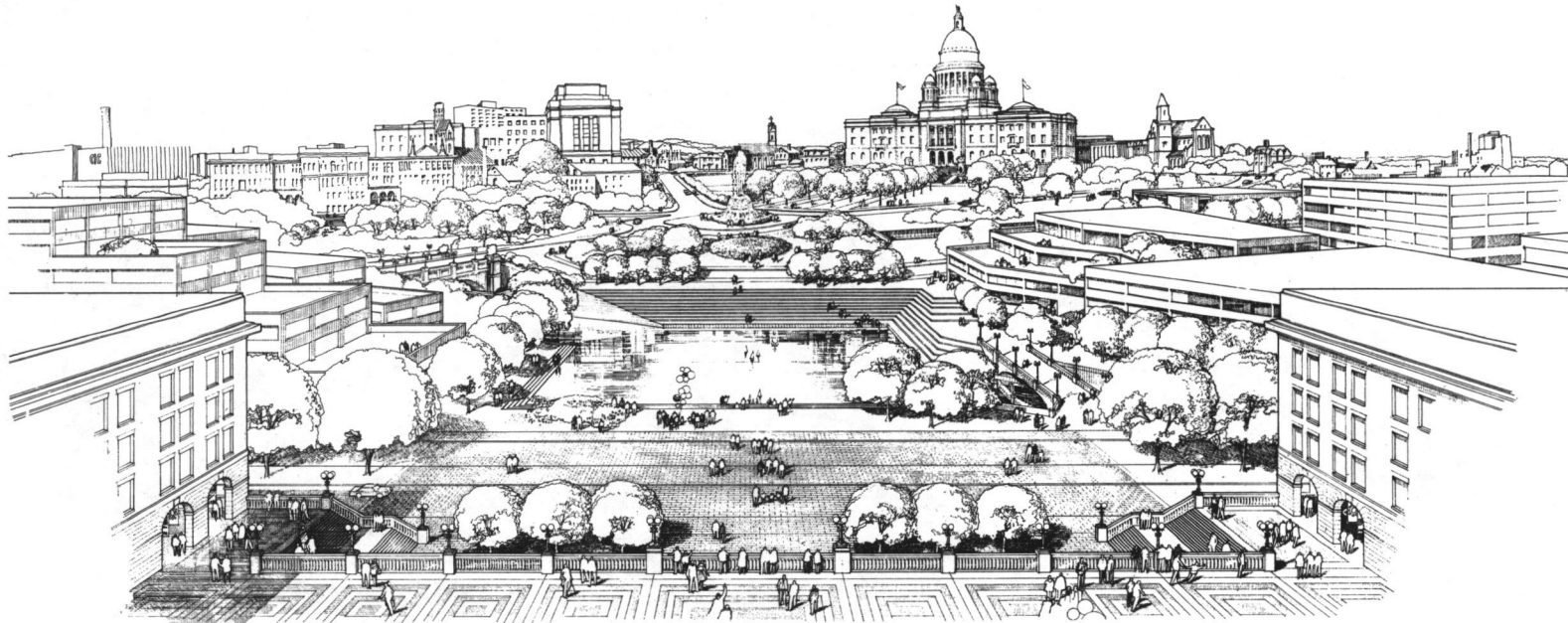


Fig. 55: Capitol Center Project Rendering (1979); Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, architect.

ZENITH AND DECLINE

By the 1920s, Smith Hill had reached its peak. Most of the land in the area was occupied, though building continued through the decade, filling the remaining undeveloped areas, especially along the western edge of Smith Hill. The population was dense, and most of the buildings were occupied by thriving, if not wealthy, citizens. A dynamic neighborhood equilibrium was well established, and, as a result, Smith Hill was an active, attractive residential neighborhood. The second wave of immigration, begun in the 1890s, somewhat changed the ethnic composition of Smith Hill, but the area remained heavily Irish, with several pockets of other ethnic groups, notably Russian Jews and Armenians, in the eastern half.

Industry was firmly established at the southern and eastern edges of Smith Hill, along the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers. Older companies continued to expand both production and physical plants, employing large numbers of residents. Remaining vacant land in these industrial corridors attracted other industries: the Wholesale Produce Market (1928) on Harris Avenue, Congdon and Carpenter (1930) on Promenade Street, and the Coca-Cola Bottling Plant (1939) on Pleasant Valley Parkway.

The small commercial nodes at the intersections of major streets continued to grow, as older dwellings were renovated for commercial use and new buildings, such as the commercial blocks at Smith and Chalkstone, were constructed.

In spite of the creation in 1920 of Saint Pius parish, which drew a number of parishioners from the western part of Smith Hill, Saint Patrick's parish continued to grow. A large new church building, begun in 1902, was completed by 1916, and a new building was erected at 244 Smith Street in 1928 to accommodate educational facilities. The 1916 church, structurally weakened, was demolished in 1979.

During this period of maturity and seeming stability, the seeds of urban decay that would almost choke the neighborhood were germinating. Suburbanization was abetted by the popularity and increasing affordability of the automobile; the Providence City Planning Commission

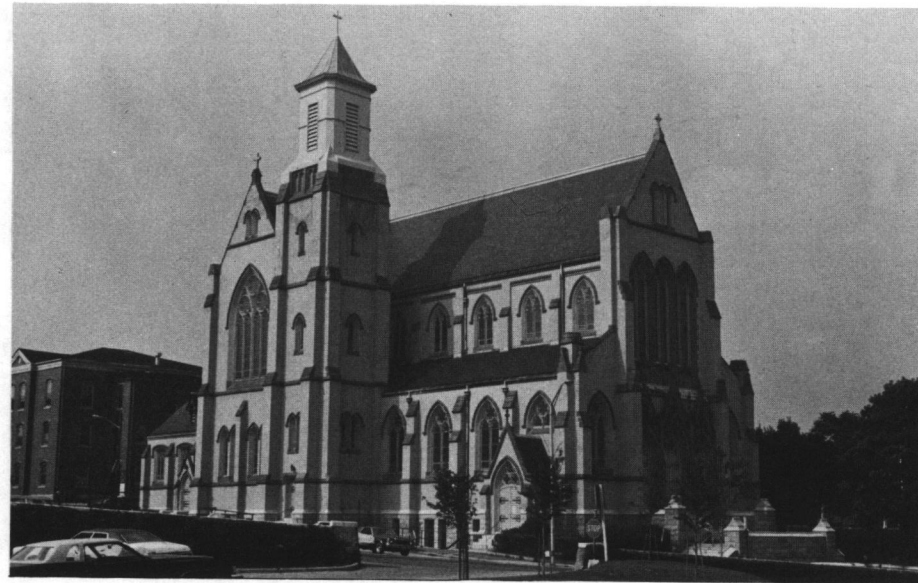


Fig. 56: St Patrick's Church (1916); formerly on Smith Street.

reported a continual decrease in population for most of Smith Hill during the 1920s, in spite of general stability for the city as a whole.

The fragile nature of Smith Hill's prosperity became apparent during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Because of the large number of factory workers living in the area, Smith Hill was one of the neighborhoods most heavily affected by layoffs: a 1939 study showed that the neighborhood had the second highest rate in the city of families on relief during the Depression.

By 1940, almost 20 per cent of the dwellings on Smith Hill were vacant, compared with 3 per cent for the city at large. Further, the proportion of owner-occupied dwellings had dropped to 19 per cent, compared with over 25 per cent for the rest of Providence. While no apparent physical deterioration or demolition had seriously changed the physical complexion of the neighborhood, it had become a less desirable place to live.

In 1939, the city created the Providence Housing Authority in response to federal and state legislation founded on the New Deal concept of uplifting the poor by providing decent housing. By erecting public housing—a place where the poor could reside temporarily, to get back

on their feet—the government hoped to break the cycle of poverty. To this end, the first housing project in Providence, Chad Brown, was begun in 1941 on a vacant parcel of land at the northwest edge of Smith Hill, at the corner of Chad Brown and Admiral Streets. Chad Brown remained filled through the war years and during the first decade after World War II. The units were well maintained by the city and by the tenants, and the project was considered successful.

In spite of the booming wartime economy in the early 1940s, Smith Hill continued its decline into the post-war years. Smith Hill's rate of decrease in population accelerated more rapidly than that of Providence at large after 1940. The prosperity of the 1940s provided the means for many families to move to more comfortable, newer dwellings in less congested parts of Providence or in suburban areas such as Cranston, Johnston, Warwick, or North Providence, where employment was increasingly available as companies moved to more modern facilities away from the center of Providence.

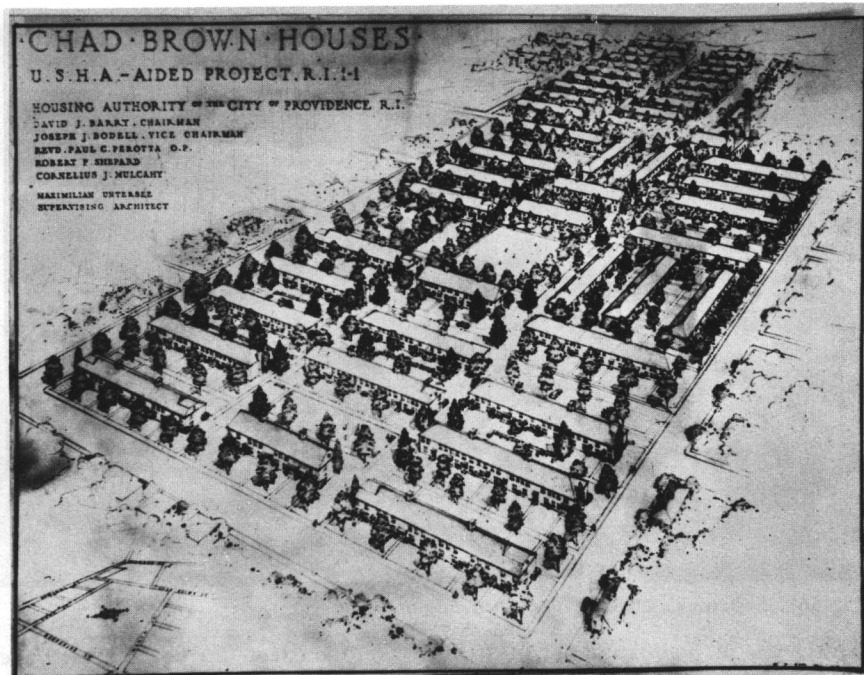


Fig. 57: Chad Brown Housing Project (1941 et seq.); Maximilian Untersee, architect.



Fig. 58: Aerial view of Smith Hill from the southeast (1958).

The urban renewal efforts of the early 1940s housing projects were augmented in 1949 by Congressional encouragement of slum clearance. This policy was a major factor in the immediate success of the housing projects; but concurrent complaints against racial segregation and the high percentage of persons earning more than the maximum allowable income in the housing projects precipitated the change in attitude toward the projects that led to their decline. The public at large came to perceive cheap public housing as a permanent alternative—a function it was never meant to serve—to dilapidated, expensive apartments. By the late 1960s, the Chad Brown project represented a more decayed environment than the surrounding neighborhoods.

Public housing was not the only government-sponsored project which changed the complexion of Smith Hill. By the 1950s, plans were being drawn for the Providence link of the Interstate Highway System. The construction of Interstate Highway 95 in the early 1960s through the heart of Smith Hill not only necessitated the demolition of some of the finest remaining examples of nineteenth-century architecture on Smith Hill, but also separated Saint Patrick's Church from much of its parish. The isolation of the Smith Hill Plat of 1830, the area of earliest settlement, from the rest of the neighborhood similarly contributed to its abandonment and eventual decline as a residential area.

The industrial move to the suburbs most significantly affected Smith Hill by the 1960s when Brown and Sharpe, Nicholson File, and American Screw had left their large plants. Many of their employees who had lived on Smith Hill also moved to the suburbs, furthering the decline of the neighborhood. The West River Redevelopment Project of the late 1950s created an industrial park to the north of Smith Hill, but it is isolated by railroads and highways; though some residents work in these facilities, employees come from all parts of Providence and surrounding towns. It is not a neighborhood industrial area.

By 1970, stripped of major sources of employment, designated as a housing-project area, and divided by an interstate highway, Smith Hill was considered an unattractive, outmoded neighborhood of densely built, antiquated housing with little bright in its future.

RETURN TO THE INNER CITY

In spite of the adverse conditions the neighborhood faced by the 1960s, it retained several factors to its advantage. Its buildings, while old and unfashionable, were largely intact and serviceable; further, they were inexpensive. Several of its major religious institutions remained extremely active. Perhaps most important of all, Smith Hill managed to maintain its sense of neighborhood identity. While over 90 per cent of the buildings on Smith Hill were erected before 1920—and over 60 per cent before 1900—most were structurally sound and had private bath and kitchen facilities. That many were multiple-family dwellings made them more readily useable than large single-family dwellings. Several important churches continued to serve large congregations. Saints Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church was still an important community center for the many Armenians who had remained on Smith Hill since the early twentieth century. Gloria Dei Lutheran Church also remained active, in spite of the departure of a large number of its parishioners from the neighborhood.

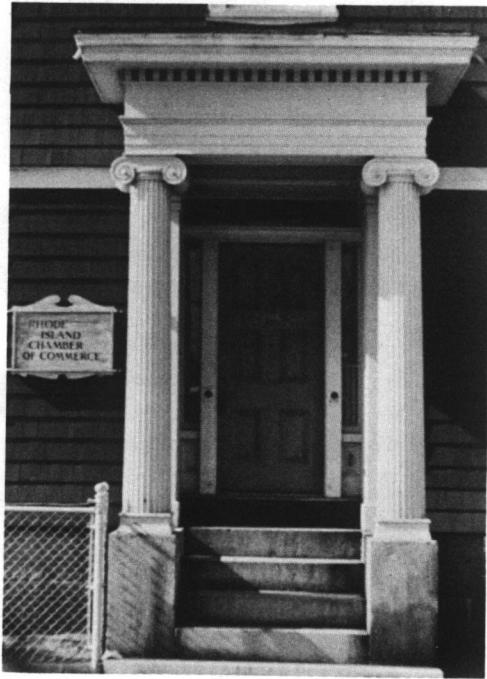


Fig. 59: Smith Street; detail of doorway.

And although weakened by the geographical division of Smith Hill, Saint Patrick's retained its important position in the religious community.

A number of life-time residents, however, remained in the neighborhood; their interest, as well as that of area businessmen, initiated a grass-roots renewal effort. In 1970, a group which had been meeting informally to discuss the future of the neighborhood formed the Capitol Hill Interaction Council (CHIC), a nonprofit organization dedicated to the revitalization of Smith Hill. Since CHIC's establishment, membership has increased to include many residents of Smith Hill. Activities include neighborhood festivals, and—most recently—a neighborhood improvement program, Project SHURE (Smith Hill Urban Revitalization Effort). SHURE is designed to help residents rehabilitate existing building stock and to improve the visual quality of the neighborhood.

This key, neighborhood-based effort has dovetailed with the return of residents to Smith Hill, many attracted to the Word of God Community at the re-organized Saint



Fig. 60: Alma Street, detail of doorway.

Patrick's Church. In 1971, Bishop McVinney had agreed to the creation in Providence of a Pentecostal parish. (This spiritual-community movement began at Duquesne University in 1967 and has spread rapidly since.) Saint Patrick's Church was selected and placed in the hands of the present clergy, and the new parish has brought new families into the area to become part of the growing religious community.

Opportunities for nearby work have increased with the recycling of the Brown and Sharpe plant as the Capitol Industrial Center, a complex including state agencies, private businesses, and educational facilities.

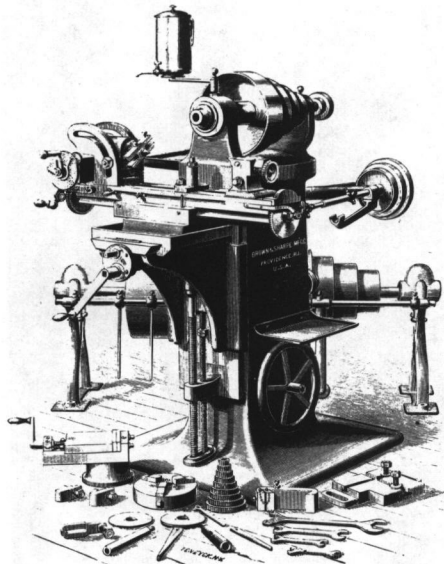
Ten years ago, Smith Hill differed little from many inner-city neighborhoods caught on the downward spiral toward oblivion. Deterioration of the built and social fabrics, begun in the 1930s, continued in spite of government aid. While the neighborhood today still faces a number of urban problems, the recent growth of the neighborhood and broad-based concern for its future should assure its thriving as an urban residential center.



Fig. 61: Pleasant Valley Parkway; detail of Coca-Cola bottling plant.

IV. SUMMARY

Smith Hill today is a bipartite urban area traversed by a major interstate highway. An upper- and middle-class suburban retreat from the city in its earliest years of development, it became a working-class residential neighborhood with the growth of industry along the rivers which form two of its borders. As Providence industry expanded, Smith Hill filled with small cottages and multiple-family dwellings to house the largely immigrant population attracted to the nearby factories. The eastern portion has been gradually appropriated for institutional and government buildings during the twentieth century—a divergence in land use formalized by the construction of I-95 in the early 1960s. The western section, a largely cohesive residential neighborhood with small commercial areas at major intersections, reflects its rapid growth between 1875 and 1925. While decline of the area between 1930 and 1970 reduced its population and desirability, Smith Hill remains densely built and largely intact, filled primarily with wood-frame, multiple-family dwellings. The last decade has witnessed a renewal of interest and activity in the neighborhood.



NO. 1 UNIVERSAL MILLING MACHINE.

Fig. 62: Brown & Sharpe Universal Milling Machine Number 1.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

A preservation plan for Smith Hill should account for the government center, the residential neighborhood, and the commercial zones as distinct entities; and any goals should be set with the long-term land-use potentials of each area in mind. The following recommendations include an evaluation of the present situation and suggestions toward solutions of preservation problems in each of the three areas. These recommendations are presented based on the premise that broad-based community participation along with energetic municipal coordination and direction are necessary to implement an effective neighborhood conservation program. Agencies exist at the local, state, and federal levels which can assist in various capacities, but long-lived results in the revitalization of Smith Hill can be accomplished only through continued community initiative and determination like that already evinced by present efforts.

RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD

The residential neighborhood is the largest part of Smith Hill and most strongly links the area with its past. While economic, social, and visual problems exist, the renewed influx of residents and the efforts of CHIC and other organizations portend a brightened future. Renewal should be thoughtfully planned to take maximum advantage of the neighborhood's existing resources.

1. The successful implementation of any neighborhood preservation program depends upon the residents' awareness of their architectural and cultural heritage. A number of educational projects could further this end.
 - A. An exhibition of Smith Hill historical documents, artifacts, and old photographs could be mounted in one of the neighborhood centers.

- B. Older members of the community could be called upon to relate oral histories of Smith Hill. A compilation of these reminiscences would provide a wealth of material useful for students of Smith Hill history.
 - C. Walking tours through Smith Hill sponsored by local organizations could emphasize history and development. Similarly, self-guided walking tours would provide a permanent educational tool for the neighborhood.
 - D. The marker program of the Providence Preservation Society, funded by a grant from the Mayor's Office of Community Development, has recently expanded to include Smith Hill. Increased publicity of this program could raise awareness of the history and value of buildings in the area and their proper restoration and maintenance.
 - E. Articles on the history of Smith Hill, culled from area residents and histories of the area, could be published in neighborhood newspapers such as the *Capitol Letter*.
 - F. Neighborhood festivals, already a part of Smith Hill life, could be organized around historical themes.
 - G. A unit on Smith Hill history should be incorporated into the public-school curriculum.
2. Private restoration and rehabilitation efforts should be encouraged to preserve the character of the neighborhood and to improve the built environment. While many have outmoded mechanical systems and would benefit from repair and maintenance, most buildings are well constructed. Rehabilitation of these

houses would improve their appearance and raise their value and create a more pleasant and desirable neighborhood. Improvements to the housing stock would be less costly than replacement.

- A. Revitalization efforts should be promoted and coordinated through community agencies and preservation organizations—such as the Smith Hill Urban Revitalization Effort (SHURE)—to increase effectiveness on a neighborhood basis.
- B. Rehabilitation should be carried out in a manner sympathetic to the building. Retention of original detailing and architectural elements is important to the integrity of these buildings and contributes substantially to the character of the neighborhood. Resheathing of buildings with vinyl or aluminum siding should be strongly discouraged; not only is the character of the building diminished thereby, but artificial siding can often compound structural problems, such as water retention, and aggravate fire damage.
- C. Residents of Smith Hill should be encouraged, whenever applicable, to use the Tax Reform Act of 1976 which contains important new tax incentives for preserving commercial properties (that is, income-producing properties) that qualify as certified historic structures, which are defined as depreciable structures: (1) listed on the National Register of Historic Places, (2) located in a National Register District and certified by the Secretary of the Interior as being of historical significance to the district, or (3) located in a local historic-zoning district certified by the Secretary of the Interior to be controlled by design-review procedures which will substantially achieve the purpose of preserving and rehabilitating buildings of historical significance. Specific details of the Tax

Reform Act of 1976 can be obtained from a tax analyst or the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

COMMERCIAL

The Smith Hill commercial areas are integral parts of the neighborhood's historic fabric still viable today. These nodes, at major intersections, are important both to the commercial livelihood of the area and to social interaction among residents. Their preservation is important to the continuity of the sense of neighborhood. Any improvements should be made within the context of an urban, neighborhood commercial area, maintaining the scale, density, and character of the existing streetscape.

- 1. Owners of buildings should take advantage of low-interest loans and grants available through government programs, such as the storefront program administered through the Mayor's Office of Community Development (MOCD), to rehabilitate or restore these commercial structures.
- 2. A study of commercial areas should be carried out to establish development guidelines for long-range planning.

GOVERNMENT CENTER

The eastern portion of Smith Hill, dominated by the state government buildings and separated by I-95, has become an entity unto itself, distinct from the rest of the Smith Hill residential neighborhood. While some residential structures remain, the eventual expansion of state office facilities will completely appropriate the whole of this section. Growth in this area is inevitable, and it should be carefully planned to account for the existing resources.

- 1. State-owned buildings within the government-center

area should be studied thoroughly to determine the feasibility of their appropriate re-use. Many of these buildings merit rehabilitation and could provide additional space at a fraction of the cost of new construction. This study should focus on (A) the ability of state-owned or acquirable buildings to meet projected demands and (B) the practicability of their rehabilitation.

- 2. The Smith Hill Government Center master plan, well over ten years old, should be re-evaluated in light of the utility of existing buildings in the area. By coordinating rehabilitation with new construction, the state could maximize potential space and minimize cost.
- 3. The State House and its lawns should remain unaltered, and no new development—neither buildings nor parking facilities—should be allowed to encroach upon it. Development adjacent to the Capitol should be sensitive to the visual importance of this landmark.
- 4. The remaining residential buildings in the government-center development area should be preserved. As the state acquires these properties, careful planning should make use of these few, fine remaining examples of mid-nineteenth-century architecture. If expansion plans preclude their use *in situ*, these buildings should be offered for sale to move to suitable sites, preferably within the Smith Hill neighborhood.
- 5. Landscaping would greatly improve the visual quality of the former Rhode Island College site, now used by the Family Court and the University of Rhode Island Extension Division. These two buildings form a fine complex, which is now scarcely visible because of poorly planned parking and the neglected underbrush that virtually mask the facades of the two structures from Promenade Street.

APPENDIX A: NATIONAL REGISTER PROGRAM

The National Register of Historic Places is a record maintained by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, United States Department of the Interior, of structures, sites, areas, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as the official inventory of the cultural and historic resources of the nation, it includes historical areas within the National Park System, National Historic Landmarks, federal properties nominated by federal agencies, and properties of state and local significance nominated by each state and approved by the Service. It is an authoritative guide for federal, state, and local governments and private groups and individuals everywhere, identifying those properties which are particularly worthy of preservation throughout the nation. Registered properties are protected from federally funded and licensed activities by a state and federal review process. Listing on the National Register is a prerequisite for eligibility for federal matching grants-in-aid funds which are administered within the state by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

The following properties are either on or have been approved for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. Only properties which are on the National Register are eligible for grants-in-aid or Tax Act benefits. Those properties that are within National Register Districts must be certified by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission as historic structures in order to qualify for grants-in-aid or Tax Act benefits.

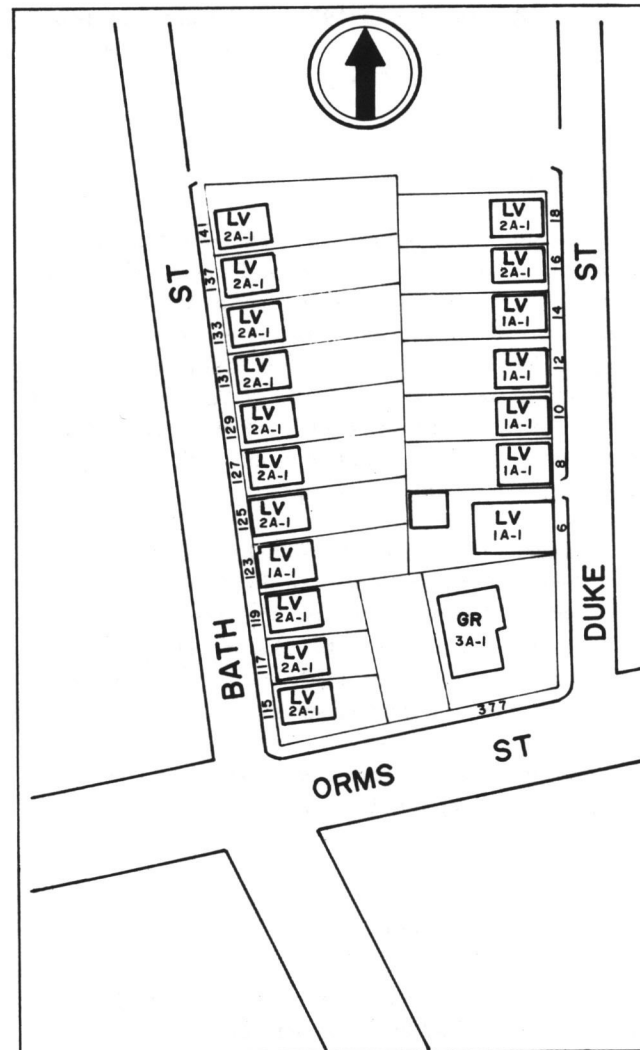


Fig. 63: Andrew Dickhaut Cottages Historic District.

INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURES ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES:

Rhode Island State House (90 Smith Street)
Admiral Esek Hopkins House (97 Admiral Street)

INDIVIDUAL STRUCTURES APPROVED BY THE RHODE ISLAND REVIEW BOARD FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES:

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church (15 Hayes Street)
Northup-Preston-Martin House (17 Jefferson Street)
Saints Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church (68 Jefferston Street)
Smith Street School (396 Smith Street)
Charles Dowler House (581 Smith Street)
Brown and Sharpe Complex (Promenade at Holden Streets)

DISTRICTS APPROVED BY THE RHODE ISLAND REVIEW BOARD FOR NOMINATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES:

Andrew Dickhaut Cottages Historic District
Chalkstone Avenue Historic District
Oakland Avenue Historic District

APPENDIX B: TAX REFORM ACT OF 1976

The Tax Reform Act of 1976 contains important new tax incentives for preserving historic income-producing properties and alters provisions in the federal tax code which have worked against historical preservation. Commercial, industrial or rental residential properties that qualify as "certified historic structures" are entitled to tax advantages under the new act. A "certified historic structure" is defined in the law as a depreciable structure which is (A) listed in the National Register, (B) located in a National Register historic district and is certified by the Secretary of the Interior as being of historic significance to the district or (C) located in a local historic-zoning district certified by the Secretary of the Interior to be controlled by design-review procedures which will substantially achieve the purpose of preserving and rehabilitating buildings of historical significance. One provision of the Act permits the owner of a certified historic structure to write off, over a five-year period, expenditures which are part of a certified rehabilitation of the property. Before passage of the Tax Reform Act, property owners were required to spread deductions over the life of the property. The new law allows larger tax savings in shorter time, thus encouraging owners to rehabilitate historic commercial properties. Another provision allows taxpayers to depreciate "substantially rehabilitated historic property" as though they were the original users of the property, entitling them to use accelerated depreciation which could previously only be used for new buildings. The code discourages demolition of historic properties in two ways. Demolition costs can no longer be deducted, and any new building replacing a demolished historic structure is denied accelerated depreciation. Although the Tax Reform Act of 1976 needs further analysis and clarification, it will clearly make the preservation of historic buildings more economically feasible. Any property owner interested in learning more about the historical preservation provisions of the Act should contact a tax analyst or the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission.

APPENDIX C: GRANTS-IN-AID PROGRAM

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established a program of matching grants-in-aid for development of properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Once a year, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission accepts applications from individuals, public and private organizations, and state and local government units which own properties listed on the National Register.

Matching grants-in-aid can be used to acquire, protect, stabilize, rehabilitate, restore, or reconstruct National Register properties. Allowable work under the program includes exterior and interior restoration, structural repairs, installation or updating of utility systems, architectural fees, archeology, historical research, and the installation of protective systems. New Construction, furnishings, and modern landscaping are not generally allowable.

The Commission receives many more applications each year than it is able to fund. The applications are evaluated according to the following criteria: the architectural and historical significance of the property; the degree to which the proposed use and treatment respect the historical and architectural values of the building; the urgency of the proposed work; the public benefit of the project, both educational and economic; the degree to which the property is threatened; and the geographical location of the property. The Commission may fund up to half the cost of a project. The grants awarded by the Commission have generally ranged in size from \$3,000 to \$50,000.

Once the Commission has selected the projects to be funded, the grantees must submit professionally prepared specifications and drawings developed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic

Preservation Projects. The Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service in the Department of the Interior must review and approve the individual projects before any work can begin.

Financial assistance for the acquisition and development of National Register properties is provided for the benefit of the general public. Therefore, upon accepting a grant, the property owner must sign a preservation easement which is recorded with the deed to the property. The easement states that the owner agrees to maintain the property and not make any visual or structural changes without prior approval from the Commission. The number of years this agreement is in effect depends on the amount of funds received. Unless the grant-supported work is visible from a public right-of-way, the property must be open for public view twelve days a year.

Matching funds can come from any non-federal source; from Community Development Block Grant Funds; and in the form of donated services, real property, or equipment. Grant applicants are urged to submit requests for the amount for which they can actually match and realistically complete in one year.

Applications will be accepted by the Commission during March and April each year. The applications are reviewed during May and June and the Commission selects the projects in July, after Rhode Island is notified of its annual federal appropriation for the grants-in-aid program. Those selected are first awarded funds to have the necessary specifications and drawings prepared. Development grants are officially awarded once the specifications have been accepted by the Commission. Project work may begin when the project has been approved by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service after the start of the federal fiscal year, October 1st. Project work must be completed within a year.

APPENDIX D: SURVEY FORM AND MAPS

A standard survey form, the "Historic Building Data Sheet," has been prepared by the Preservation Commission for use throughout the state. On the form a property is identified by plat and lot numbers, street number, ownership at the time the survey was conducted, present use, neighborhood land use, and a photograph.

Each property is also identified by one or more broad period time-frames which denote the original construction date and date(s) of major additions or alterations: P = pre-historic (before 1636), C = Colonial (1700-1800), F = Federal (1775-1840), GR = Greek Revival (1825-1865), EV = Early Victorian (1840-1870), LV = Late Victorian (1865-1910), ET = early twentieth century (1900-1940), MT = mid-twentieth century (1940-1975), and LT = late twentieth century (1975-present).

The "COMMENTS" section is used for brief notations regarding a building's style, structure, details, and architectural significance. The "HISTORY & SOURCES" section includes notes on individuals, organizations, and events associated with the building; dates and nature of significant additions or alterations; selected bibliographical and pictorial references; and identification of the building on historical maps and in street directories.

The four "EVALUATION" sections are intended as tools for quick reference to appraise various aspects of a property's preservation value. In general, the key factors that indicate the reason for preserving structures have to do with their visual significance—that is, "Architectural value" and "Importance to neighborhood." Other factors, such as condition, should be seen as pluses. Nor should a low historical rating be allowed to militate against the preservation of buildings deemed of architectural significance or those important in the neighborhood context.

The evaluation of a structure's exterior physical condition is rated on a 0, 2, 3, 5 scale, without regard to its architectural merits. Buildings assigned "5" are in excellent physical condition (original or altered). Those rated "3" are in good condition, with only slight evidence of the need for improvements, such as repainting or minor repairs. Structures rated "2" are in fair condition, and may

require substantial work, such as resheathing, or repairs to porches, fenestration, and so on. Buildings rated "0" are in poor physical condition, and probably require extensive work if they are to be retained. These ratings are based upon observation of the exterior only, and do not reflect interior appearance or structural, electrical, and mechanical conditions.

The evaluation of the grounds, either of a building or a site, is rated on a 0, 1, 2 scale. Those that are in good condition and are a visual asset to the environment are as-

signed "2." The "1" rating indicates that the grounds do not detract from the surrounding area. The "0" rating applies to grounds that have a negative impact on the environs.

The evaluation of the neighborhood's physical condition is based on a 0, 2, 3 scale. "Neighborhood," in this context, denotes the immediate area surrounding a surveyed property, and does not necessarily reflect physical features such as street blocks or demographic boundaries. Neighborhoods rated "3" are characterized by a uniformly

HISTORIC BUILDING DATA SHEET RHODE ISLAND STATEWIDE SURVEY		COUNTY Providence	
FILE NO. _____ PLAT <u>69</u> LOT <u>24</u> LUS _____		CITY/TOWN Providence	
ADDRESS <u>127-129 Oakland Avenue</u>			
OWNER <u>Marion & Alan S. Wilson</u>		ROAD + 127-129 Oakland Ave.	
PRESENT USE: 1 fam _____ 2 fam _____ multi <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X pub _____ comm _____ indus _____ reli _____ agr _____ mixed _____ other _____		NEGATIVE NO. <u>33-WSH 22</u>	
NEIGHBORHOOD LAND USE: res <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X comm _____ indus _____ pub _____ agr _____ woods _____ other _____		KNOWN AS _____	
PERIOD/STYLE: P C F GR EV LV <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ET MT LT		ARCHITECT _____	
DESCRIPTION: Stories: <u>3-1/2</u> Roof: gable (flank _____ end <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cross _____) gambrel (flank _____ end _____ cross _____) hip _____ monitor _____ mansard _____ flat _____ other _____		DATE & SOURCES <u>1924-1926</u>	
Walls: clapboard <u>1,2</u> brick _____ stone _____ shingle <u>3</u> (wood) _____ modern comp _____ other _____		ORIGINAL USE _____	
Foundation: height <u>2 1/2</u> ' stone _____ brick ? _____ other <u>stuccoed</u>		ORIGINAL OWNER _____	
Alterations: good _____ poor _____ none <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X Rare bldg. _____ Typical of its area <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X		HISTORY & SOURCES:	
COMMENTS:		EVALUATION:	
		Physical Condition	
		structure <u>5</u> <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	
		grounds <u>2</u> <u>1</u> <u>0</u>	
		neighborhood <u>3</u> <u>2</u> <u>0</u>	
		10	
		Architectural value 38 30 <u>20</u> 10 0	
		20	
		Importance to neighborhood 14 <u>10</u> 5 0	
		10	
SURVEYOR _____ AV Checked _____		Historical value 38 30 20 <u>10</u> 0	
SUPERVISOR _____ HV Checked _____		10	
DATE: _____		1	
		Total Score 50	
		PRIORITY	
		2A	
		MAP NO.	

Fig. 64: Sample survey form.

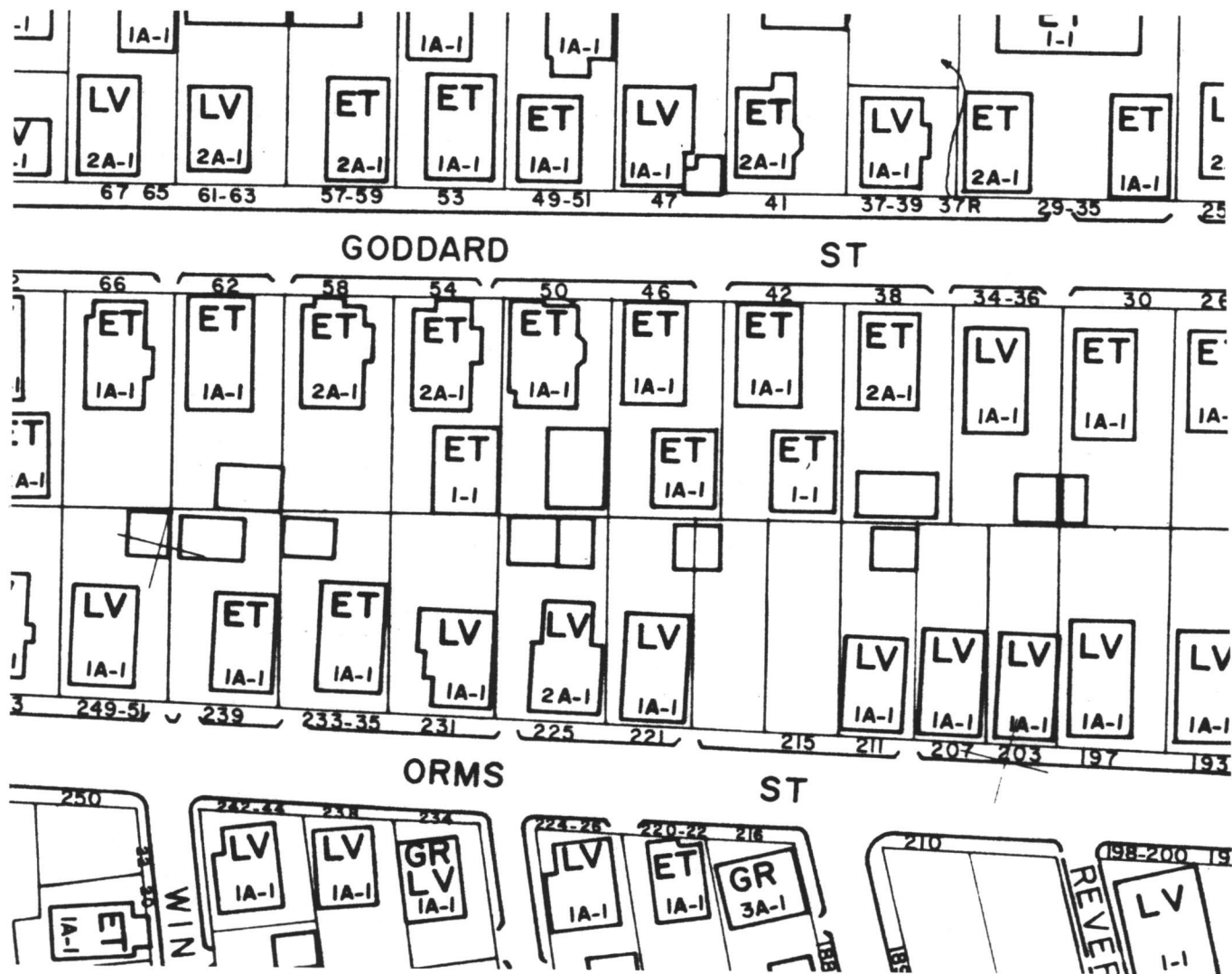


Fig. 65: Sample section of survey map.

high standard of maintenance of both buildings and grounds. Those assigned a "2" have well kept properties in much of the area, but also have sections where the need for improvement is readily apparent. The "0" rating is used for areas which, for the most part, detract from the visual quality of the community as a whole.

Architectural ratings are assigned on a 0, 10, 20, 30, 38 scale. The "38" rating is reserved for a generally small number of buildings deemed of outstanding im-

portance to the community and which, in most cases, are also of at least regional significance. The "30" rating indicates a structure of meritorious architectural quality, well above the local norm. The "20s" and "10s" constitute the majority of buildings surveyed. They are of local value by virtue of interesting or unusual architectural features or because they are good representatives of building types which afford an index to the community's physical development and define the visual character of its building stock. Structures rated "20" and "30" are essential

to an area's historic character. They provide a visual context which defines the historic quality of Smith Hill and create an important background to the key structures rated "38." Buildings rated "0" are undistinguished architectural and make no positive contribution to the physical environment. Structures that have been extensively and unsympathetically altered are given lower ratings than similar buildings in their original state. Monuments, markers, and civic sculpture are assigned ratings on the basis of general visual and associative qualities which do not necessarily reflect artistic integrity.

A property's importance to its neighborhood is rated on a 0, 5, 10, 14 scale, with "neighborhood" used according to the above definition. The "14" rating denotes a property that is a key visual landmark, of the utmost importance to the visual integrity of its environs. Those rated "10" make an important visual contribution either by virtue of individually distinguished qualities or due to characteristics of form, scale, and massing which help maintain the visual continuity of the surrounding area. The "5" rating indicates a minor, but positive, contribution in either of the above respects or a property which may be of visual interest unto itself, but one which is not especially compatible with its physical context. "0" applies to properties which have a decisively negative effect on the neighborhood.

Historical value is also rated on a 0, 10, 20, 30, 38 scale. The "38" rating is assigned to properties associated with individuals (including architects), organizations, or events which are of historic significance on the national level. Those of regional or state importance are rated "30." The "20" rating applies to entries related to noteworthy local developments and also includes buildings which, by virtue of their age, are considered to make a major contribution to the community's historic environment. The "10" rating denotes limited local historical value. The "0" rating is used to designate properties of no known historic interest at the present time.

Data from the survey sheets have been transferred to a series of detailed maps, drawn on a 1" = 80' scale. These maps depict every structure, regardless of date or historical importance, along with the address, a code for period or style, and the architectural and historic ratings. They make information pertaining to the cultural resources of the Smith Hill area available for all planning purposes.

APPENDIX E: INVENTORY

The following structures and sites on Smith Hill are of architectural, environmental, or historic importance. Each entry has significance either in itself, by association, or, in the case of some buildings, as representative examples of a common architectural type.

The names associated with many buildings are generally the names of the earliest known owner or the builder identified, for the most part, through deed research.

Entries are listed alphabetically by street and then in numerical order by address. Unless otherwise noted, all buildings are of wood-frame construction.

** Listed in the National Register

* Proposed for nomination to the National Register

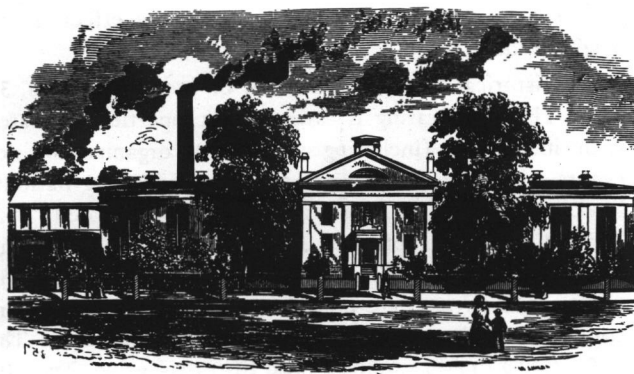


Fig. 66: State Prison (ca 1845).

ADMIRAL STREET

Union Paper Company, formerly the Oriental Mill Complex (1861): The 3-story brick mill, now somewhat altered, has a low gable roof and stair towers in the centers of the east and west elevations; the tower on the Whipple Street side has a bracketed helm roof above the belfry. The regular fenestration, the oculus windows in the gable ends, and the severe modillion raking and eaves cornices are characteristic of the period. The Oriental Mill, one of the oldest manufactories of cotton cloth in Providence, was established by the Reed family in 1861 and later operated by the J. P. Campbell Company. By 1901 the mill produced over four and a half million yards of cotton goods annually and employed 250 workers, many of whom lived in cottages on nearby Whipple and Fillmore Streets.

**97 Esek Hopkins House (1756 et seq.): In 1751, Hopkins moved from Newport to Providence, where he purchased a 200-acre retreat. The land was unsuitable for farming, and Hopkins continued to pursue his maritime interests. By 1756, he had completed the 1½-story, gambrel-roof portion of the dwelling, which continued to house his family during his tenure as Commander-in-Chief of the newly created American navy from 1775 to 1777. Following his dismissal by the Continental Congress, Hopkins served in the Rhode Island General Assembly until 1785. After his death in 1802, his descendants added the 2-story, gable-roof section and the 1-story ell to the southwest of the original structure. Its present state reflects both the alterations made by Hopkins's descendants in the 19th century and the restorations of 1908 (when the house was given to the city), of the late 1950s, and of 1978. Since 1908, the house has been operated as a museum.

* ALMA STREET

Filled with 2½-story, gable-end-to-the-street houses, this short street was almost completely developed during the mid-1880s as investment properties by non-Smith Hill residents. The houses on Alma Street are nearly identical, and in their generally unaltered state evince the standard 2-family dwelling type constructed when Smith Hill was the most rapidly growing part of Providence; as such, it is a significant part of the proposed Chalkstone, Pekin, Douglas, and Candace Streets Historic District.

ARLINE STREET

30 Department of Transportation Maintenance Headquarters (1927): Built for the Department of Transportation, this 2-story building with flat roof and pier-and-spandrel construction represents the waxing influence of the machine aesthetic on Art Deco, a combination appropriate to industrial buildings; in design terms, it was one of the first modernistic buildings erected by the state government.

BATH STREET

*115 to 141 (odd) Dickhaut Houses (1883): Built by Andrew Dickhaut, a major investor in Smith Hill real estate during the last two decades of the 19th century, these small, 1½-story, 3-bay, side-hall-plan cottages were rented by employees in the numerous nearby industries along the Woonasquacket River to the south. The Dickhaut cottages are the largest intact group of small, workers' dwellings extant in Providence and represent an important alternative to multi-family housing—the small but more private single-family rented house.

BERNON STREET

28-30 Catherina Lynn House (1896): This 2½-story, late Queen Anne tenement with cross-gable roof and large octagonal corner turret is far more elaborate than most multiple-family dwellings erected on Smith Hill. The Lynn House was occupied by its owners—as were many of the more elaborate multiple-family houses in the neighborhoods—who rented out the other units.

37 Joseph Baker House (ca 1864): A 1½-story flank-gable-roof cottage with hooded center entrance flanked by bay windows, the Baker House is typical of the modest structures built around mid-century when the area beyond Smith and Orms Streets was first divided into house lots; it is distinguished by the round-head recessed panels in the corner pilasters and good bracketed detailing. Baker was a moulder with a shop at 12 Steeple Street.

42-60 Andrew Dickhaut Heirs Row (1891): Composed of nine attached 4-bay units, each with its own private entrance, the 2-story, flat-roof structure is unique in Providence multiple-family housing of this period but is not unlike public-funded, low-income housing erected by cities throughout the nation in the 1940s and 1950s.

55 Charles G. Arnold House (ca 1850): One-and-a-half stories high with irregular fenestration and gable roof set end to the street, this house was built as an investment property by Arnold. It is the oldest extant house on the Lydia Allen Dorr Plat of 1847.

65 Patrick Shanley House (ca 1860): Two-and-a-half stories high with a flaring gable roof set end to the street, the 3-bay-facade, side-hall-plan Shanley House follows the most typical 19th-century plan. Shanley was an Irish-born carpenter who lived in this house with his wife Mary, also born in Ireland, and their seven children.

BROWNELL STREET

19 Capitol Chambers (ca 1915): Built in a vaguely Colonial-cum-mission style, the 3½-story, stucco-sheathed structure with a hip roof and bracketed cornice has 1-story porches on both side elevations. Capitol Chambers was constructed as a lodging house in the middle of the second decade of this

century, probably to provide space for those who came to Providence to transact state business.

- 52-54 **Frederic S. Gardiner House (ca 1893):** A 2½-story, late Queen Anne dwelling with a cross-gable roof, the Gardiner House is finely detailed with recessed arches in the gable ends, 2-story bay windows, a 2-story entrance porch on the facade, and decorative shingling. Gardiner, a music teacher with studios downtown on Westminster Street, occupied this house with his family.
- 56-58 **Albert A. Boutelle House (1892):** Two-and-half-stories high with a cross-gable roof and a smaller projecting gable on the facade, the Boutelle House has a handsome spindle-detailed entrance porch and diaper-work panels in the gable ends. Built by a machinist, the house is typical of Queen Anne-influenced 2-family houses on Smith Hill.
- 57 **Mowry-Nicholson House (1856, 1864, 1877):** Built by the contracting firm Mowry and Steere as William G. R. Mowry's residence, the house was originally a cruciform-plan Italianate villa. William T. Nicholson, owner of Nicholson File Company, bought the house in 1865 to be closer to his mills on the Woonasquatucket River at Acorn Street. He remodeled the building in 1867 and in 1877 completed a northwest addition including the 3½-story tower with oculus windows and a steeply pitched roof. The shed dormer on the cross-gable roof was added in the early 20th century, perhaps in the mid-1920s when the building was divided into small apartments.

CALAIS STREET

- 43-45 **Patrick Conway House (1873):** This 2½-story, flank-gable-roof, 6-bay-facade tenement contains four units. Built by Conway, a teamster, this dwelling, because of its proximity to Brown and Sharpe, housed workers at that mill in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

CAMDEN AVENUE

- 51 **Charles Kelley House (ca 1875):** Set end to the street, the 1½-story, gable-roof house has a 2-bay facade with a large bay window and a hooded entrance. Decorative trim includes a diamond-pattern jig-saw cornice and hood molds over the side and attic windows. Kelley is listed as a sexton in Providence directories of the period. His handsomely detailed cottage is typical of the small, single-family houses built on Smith Hill in the 1870s, mostly by Irishmen.
- 83 **Charles Dowler House (1867):** Two-and-a-half stories high with a flank-gable roof and a 3-bay facade, the Dowler House is distinguished by its round-head windows on the second story and its dentil cornice. This is the first of two houses built on Smith Hill by Charles Dowler, a native of Birmingham, England, who came to Providence in 1863 as a gunsmith to make munitions for the Union effort in the Civil War. More modest than Dowler's second house (581

Smith Street, q.v.), the Camden Street building is distinctive for its second-story fenestration.

CANDACE STREET

- 31 **Providence Public Library, Smith Hill Branch (1932):** Albert Harkness of Providence designed this 1½-story, hip-roof, brick building with a projecting central entrance pavilion. It superseded the North End Branch of the Public Library which had been established in 1910 under the auspices of the North End Working Girls Club and was located in rented quarters at 49 Orms Street.
- 32 **John T. Reilly House (1874):** A classic 2½-story, end-gable, 2-bay-facade, 2-family dwelling, the Reilly House has a side-hall entrance flanked by a 2-story bay window on the facade, and is trimmed with simple, stock, bracketed detailing. Reilly was a cigar-box maker who rented accommodations for his family on nearby Bernon Street until he moved here.
- 55 **John T. Rafferty House (1877):** Two-and-a-half stories high with a gable roof set end to the street and bracketed trim, the Rafferty House, like 32 Candace, is typical of the hundreds of 2-family houses erected in Providence—and especially on Smith Hill—between 1875 and 1895. Rafferty was a carpenter and probably built this house himself.

CHAD BROWN STREET

Chad Brown-Admiral Terrace Housing Project (1941-1942, 1950-1951): Maximilian Untersee was the supervising architect for this project built by the Housing Authority of the City of Providence, created in 1939 as a result of the special committee appointed by the City Council in 1937 to study low-cost housing and slum clearance. Chad Brown, the first of seven similar housing projects, rose on thirteen acres of unimproved land bounded by Chad Brown, March, Berkshire, and June Streets; the Admiral Terrace project, completed in 1951, increased to 590 the number of dwelling units in the 2-story, brick structures. Built with Federal funding—first provided by the Wagner-Steagall Act of 1937—to provide temporary low-income housing, the Chad Brown-Admiral Terrace Project had become a place of last resort for individuals on fixed income by the late 1950s. The deterioration of the project in the 1960s and 1970s has led to recent efforts to refurbish Providence housing projects: beginning in the spring of 1977, a plan was implemented to improve conditions in the Chad Brown project, including improvements to existing units and demolition of many neglected and irreparably vandalized units.

CHALKSTONE AVENUE

- 491-493 **House (1891):** Built by Prescott O. Clarke, the prominent Providence architect (principal in Clarke and Howe), this 2½-story Queen Anne double house has a cross-gable roof and symmetrical massing. Clarke built several investment properties on Smith Hill in the late 1880s and early 1890s,

but most are tenements; the double house is rare in Smith Hill, which was filling rapidly with tenements and three-deckers by the 1890s.

- 503½-507½ **Thomas Davis House (ca 1850):** The original Davis House was a cruciform plan, 1½-story Greek Revival cottage with a 3-bay facade, which is still intact at 503½ Chalkstone. When the area was platted into house lots and filled with tenements in the 1890s, the structure was divided into the T-shape building at 503½ Chalkstone and the rectangular building at 507½. Davis was born in Kilkenny, Ireland, in 1806, emigrated to Providence as a child, and made his fortune in jewelry manufacturing. Further, he was active in state intellectual and political life until his death in 1891. He was elected as an abolitionist to the United States House of Representatives in 1852. While a native Irishman and the first of his countrymen to represent Rhode Island in Washington, Davis was more closely allied to the existing Yankee society than to the growing numbers of Irish immigrants. His wife, Paulina Wright Davis, was an ardent supporter of women's suffrage, and her salons, both at this house and at the stately gothic mansion the Davises built in 1869 at the corner of Chalkstone Avenue and Raymond Street, were filled with intellectual luminaries who discussed the vital issues of the day. Upon his death, Davis left this second house and grounds to the City of Providence; Davis Park has remained an important part of the City's recreational facilities even after the replacement of the main house by the Veterans' Hospital in the late 1940s.
- 532 **Daniel McDuff House (ca 1867):** This 2½-story house—basically a very simple, very late Greek Revival house—has a flank-gable roof and a 5-bay facade with center entrance. McDuff, listed as a laborer in Providence directories, bought two lots of the A. C. Smith Plat in 1858, but did not complete his house until 1867. McDuff and his family remained in this house until well into the 20th century.
- 543 **Smith Hill Market, now Marcal Cleaners (1922):** Typical of the small structures that housed neighborhood businesses and were built along major arteries beginning in the second decade of the 20th century, this clapboard, 1-story, flat-roof structure has its original store fronts of plate-glass display windows flanking recessed entrances to each of the two halves. The stepped parapet above the facade continues to carry advertising signs for the businesses below.
- 551-553 **Erastus N. Steere House I (1856):** This 2½-story Greek Revival house has a cross-gable roof, stucco sheathing, heavy lintels over its upper-story windows, and modillion raking and eaves cornice. Built by one of the most important mid-19th century speculative developers on Smith Hill, the Steere House was the first dwelling erected on the 1856 Hardenburg Purchase Plat, which included Camden Avenue, Danforth Street, and Charlotte Street (now closed). Steere developed part of the Hardenburg Plat and continued to invest in real estate until the 1880s. In 1875, Steere moved to a more fashionable Second Empire House at 50 Com-

mon Street. By the early 20th century this building had been converted to flats on the upper stories, and the first floor had been altered to accommodate a store; such conversions were common during that period on major traffic arteries on Smith Hill.

619 **United Presbyterian Church (1895):** A late Victorian Richardsonian Romanesque structure of brick with brownstone-and-slate trim, this church has a steep gable roof set end to the street, round-head windows in the facade, and a corner tower with an arcade belfry. Located here to serve the rapidly increasing population at the western edge of Smith Hill and beyond, the United Presbyterian Church continued to play an active role in Smith Hill community affairs, through such agencies as its senior-citizen programs into the 1970s.

660-662 **Elisee J. Bourneuf House (1891):** Two-and-a-half stories with an end-gable roof and a 2-story bay window on the facade, this house has a double entrance under a turned-spindle porch. Bourneuf, a blacksmith, built this 2-family house, typical of those on this part of Chalkstone Avenue, soon after building lots were first offered for sale here in the 1887 Mason and Okie Plat.

CHERRY STREET

37 **Welcome Angell House (ca 1837):** Three stories with a low hip roof and a 5-bay facade with center entrance, the Angell House is typical of the dwellings that were erected on this portion of Smith Hill following its platting for house lots in 1830. This house was probably built by Angell himself; he was a carpenter and worked, like many of his trade, out of a shop at the rear of his property. This house has been enlarged and altered since its construction.

COMMON STREET

47 **Niles B. Schubarth House II (1874):** This imposing, 2½-story, High Victorian, mansard-roof house has a 3-bay facade with matching 2-story bay windows flanking a large central portico (the design of the present portico suggests an early 20th-century origin; the original porch was probably replaced at that time). A hooded door—perhaps originally a window—at the second-story level and an eccentric “sunbonnet” dormer in the attic accent the center entrance. A handsome wrought-iron fence surrounds the property and makes its small front lawn, a rarity in Smith Hill by the 1870s, seem all the more grand. Schubarth, a civil engineer and landscaper (he laid out the original portion of Swan Point Cemetery and the central portion of the North Burial Ground), had no sooner finished his adjacent house at 49 Common Street than he began construction on this more elaborate dwelling, probably designing it himself.

49 **Niles B. Schubarth House I (1872):** This 2½-story, mansard-roof dwelling with a 3-bay facade and hooded side-hall entrance is typical of the relatively few middle-class houses erected on Smith Hill in the 1870s. Schubarth, who listed

himself as an architect as well as a civil engineer in Providence directories, probably designed this house.

50 **Erastus N. Steere House II (1875):** This 2½-story, mansard-roof house with pedimented dormers was the second home Steere, a major Smith Hill real-estate developer, built for himself in the neighborhood.

59 **Thomas H. Angell House (ca 1855):** Angell, a grocer, built this 2½-story, flank-gable-roof house as an investment property. He sold it in 1859 to Charles A. Young. The bay windows on the first story and the hood over the door are late 19th-century additions.

DAVIS STREET

19 **Saint Patrick's School (1871):** The design of this 3-story brick structure is quite similar to other Roman Catholic schools of the period: the low hip roof; the regularly spaced, segmental-arch windows; and the shallow, pedimented central pavilion relate this structure to Saint Mary's School in Newport and Saint Joseph's School in Providence. The building housed Saint Patrick's Grammar School from 1871 to 1923, and it served as a high school from 1933 to 1939; it continues to house parish activities. (See separate entry for Saint Patrick's Parish, 83 Smith Street.)

60 **House, now Rhode Island State Employees Association (ca 1832):** Typical of late Federal style houses in Providence, this 2-story structure was built with a 3-bay facade—now extended one bay to the south—and a hip roof with monitor. This is the oldest extant building on the Smith Hill Plat of 1830.

90 **George M. Grant House (1868):** One of the few dwellings remaining in the easternmost part of Smith Hill, the 2-story Grant House has a 3-bay facade with a hooded center entrance and a round-head window in a central cross gable in the hip roof. Grant, a blacksmith with a shop at 6 North Main Street, lived in this house for many years; in 1882 he added the 2-story ell at the rear. By the second decade of this century, however, it had been converted to a boarding house.

DOVE STREET

24,30, 34,41, 49,53 **Houses (ca 1945-1960):** A group of 1- and 1½-story single-family dwellings, these ranch houses, along with a couple of isolated examples, represent the extent of post-World War II single-family housing built on Smith Hill. This tract of land had remained vacant throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.

DOUGLAS AVENUE

24 **Congregation of the Sons of Jacob Synagogue (1905-1920):** Harry Marshak was the architect for this two-story structure. Sited on a 1-story basement, the building has a low gable roof behind a stepped parapet at the entrance end. Built to

serve the large community of Russian Jews who settled around the eastern end of Orms Street and Chalkstone Avenue (and also on Lippitt Hill), this synagogue was dedicated in 1905. The congregation at first built only the lower portion of the building. The superstructure was completed in 1920; the cornices and roof have been heavily altered since. Now the congregation has decreased considerably in size as members moved from the congested ghetto, which has now been largely demolished by urban renewal and the construction of Interstate Highway 95. 133-137 **Douglas Avenue Fire Station (1902):** Sanders and Thornton were the architects for this 2½-story, brick, Colonial Revival fire station. The structure is distinguished by its white stone trim and the projecting corner tower. Used as a fire station by the city for almost fifty years, the facility was replaced by the Admiral Street station in 1949. The city sold the building in 1955, at which time it was converted to commercial use.

209 **Hennessey-McHale Block, now the Armenian American Civic Club (ca 1873):** This 3½-story brick structure has store fronts on the first story and three evenly spaced windows on the upper stories; all fenestration on the facade is crowned with keystone hood molds. The hip roof is a later alteration. Hennessey, a grocer who lived at 19 Mulberry, rented this building to the McHale family which operated a grocery store on the first floor and lived upstairs between 1874 and 1926; the McHales bought the building in 1892. It has been the home of the Armenian American Civic Club since 1940, thus continuing to house an important neighborhood center. (265) **Saint Patrick's Cemetery (1843):** One of the oldest Roman Catholic cemeteries in Rhode Island, Saint Patrick's Cemetery was established by the parish's first priest, the Reverend William Wiley; it is the final resting place of a number of the earliest Irish immigrants to Rhode Island. The section set aside for the Sisters of Mercy, who came to Providence beginning in 1851 to take charge of teaching in Roman Catholic schools, has been designated a Rhode Island Historic Cemetery. At the center of the grounds, which are divided into four quadrants, is the tomb of the Reverend Patrick Lamb, the second pastor of Saint Patrick's (1854-1867). Today the small (approximately eight acres) cemetery is filled.

DUKE STREET

*6,8,10, 12, 14, 16,18 **Andrew Dickhaut Heirs Houses (ca 1897):** These seven identical workers' cottages exemplify the Queen Anne mode of the late 19th century at its simplest: one-and-a-half stories high with gable roofs set end to the street, they were originally clapboarded with decorative shingle panels, and their facades were articulated with bay windows and turned-spindle porches. This more elaborate treatment distinguishes these dwellings from the earlier cottages Dickhaut and his heirs built on Fillmore, Lydia, and Bath Streets (q.v.). Andrew Dickhaut had died in 1893, and this group of

cottages represents the last speculative building undertaken by his family on Smith Hill.

- 7 Patrick Donnelly House (ca 1865): Donnelly was a mason, and his 1½-story cottage with a 3-bay facade and center entrance is an excellent example of a common mid-19th-century housing type on Smith Hill.

ESTEN STREET

- 10 Patrick Denahy House (18th century, probably before 1750): Moved to this site ca 1857, the 2½-story house has a flank-gable roof with an overhang on the southern end. Its facade has an irregularly spaced 5-bay treatment on the first story and four irregularly spaced windows on the second; the center entrance is articulated by a Federal-style doorway with engaged colonettes and side and transom lights. This house was originally a 3-bay, flank-gable-roof house with a massive chimney directly behind the entrance hall. The Federal detailing was added early in the 19th century, probably after the house was extended two bays on its present northern side. The massive chimney was removed, no doubt, when the house was brought to this site by Patrick Denahy, a tailor who had previously lived on State Street.

FELIX STREET

First opened in 1884 as part of the Mason and Okie Plat, Felix Street documents the rapid change in form of multiple-family dwellings that occurred in the late 19th and early 20th centuries: the 2½-story, 3-bay, rectangular house, dating from the early 1880s, such as 21 Felix; the 2½-story, cross-gable-roof dwelling with projecting bay windows and porches, built beginning in the late 1880s, such as 56-58 Felix; and the variety of forms used for the three-decker, from the irregularly massed Queen Anne mode employed at 39-41 Felix in the late 1890s to the simple box of 64-66 Felix, built ca 1925.

FILLMORE STREET

Houses (ca 1875-1885): These 1½- workers' cottages set gable end to the street are typical of those built in the late 19th century on Smith Hill. Many are identical to those built on Bath and Lydia Streets (q.v.) by Andrew Dickhaut, who constructed at least five of these.

FRANCIS STREET

- 106 Rhode Island Medical Society Building (1911-1912): Clark, Howe and Homer, one of the leading Providence architectural firms in the Colonial Revival movement of the early 20th century, designed this 2-story Federal Revival brick building with sandstone trim. The 5-bay facade has a center entrance surmounted by a segmental-arch pedimented window. A wide modillion cornice separates the second story from the

parapet which surrounds the flat roof. The format of this building is derived from 18th-century British and early 19th-century Adam and Adamesque town-house prototypes in which the second floor was the principal story. Here, the tall 2nd-story windows are set in blind arches and are set off with shallow wrought-iron balconies. This architecturally sophisticated building is the first permanent home of the Rhode Island Medical Society, a professional organization founded in 1812.

- 144 Apartment Building (ca 1894): Built by Ann Francis Brown, this 3-story, hip-roof structure has brick sheathing on the first story and wood shingles on the upper stories. Similar in style to many contemporary three-deckers, this apartment building is one of the earlier of its type in the city.

HAYES STREET

- *15 Gloria Dei Lutheran Church (1928): The Swedish architect Martin Hedmark collaborated with the Providence firm of Jackson, Robertson and Adams in the design of this extremely unusual structure. Founded by 75 Swedish immigrants in 1890, the congregation had exceeded 700 by the 1920s and had outgrown the original facilities on this site. Hedmark's design for the church draws from precedents in his homeland, such as the Gripsholms Slott, and unifies this vernacular style with an elaborate trinitarian iconography and traditional ecclesiastical format into the most architecturally noteworthy 20th-century church in Providence. The exterior of the brick-and-limestone building is dominated by two towers, the taller eastern one culminating in a cross. The simple grey stucco interior is distinguished by ornate wooden candelabra and its original furniture.

INTERSTATE HIGHWAY 95

(1962 et seq.) Although planning of a major interstate highway system was under discussion as early as the 1930s, it was only in the mid-1950s that this national highway system took form. Local discussion of a north-south freeway began in the late 1940s, and the location of the road was debated throughout the 1950s; work began in 1962. The construction of this highway was a major force in the post-war deterioration and disintegration of the Smith Hill neighborhood. Cutting a wide path through the oldest portion of Smith Hill, the highway not only eliminated nearly 100 dwellings and displaced some 600 residents, but also separated Saint Patrick's church from many of its parishioners.

JEFFERSON STREET

- *17 Nelson C. Northup House (1853): One of the most elaborate transitional Greek Revival-Italianate style houses in Providence, the well preserved Northup House is two-and-a-half stories high with a pedimented end-gable roofline surmount-

ed by a large octagonal cupola. The 3-bay facade has heavy quoins and, to one side, a hooded entrance with pendant drops and colored, etched, Venetian glass in the transom and side lights. The house sits on a high, granite basement, and its side yard is enclosed by a handsome wrought-iron fence. Northup was a grocer who later turned to real-estate speculation. His success in real estate is evinced by the substantiality of his house.

- *60 Jefferson Street Baptist Church, now Saints Sahag and Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church (1868): Built in a simplified Venetian Gothic style for the Baptist congregation centered around Holden and Park Streets, this rugged brick structure has alternating brown and white radiating voussoirs over its round-arch door and window openings, and its well proportioned polygonal tower, centered in the facade, had until the 1930s a tall steeple that was a prominent local landmark. It is now topped by a large, blue, illuminated cross that is equally visible. When the Baptists merged with several other congregations in 1913, thus vacating the building, it was sold to the Armenians, whose rapid growth on Smith Hill in the early years of the 20th century required their finding facilities for religious and social gatherings. The reconsecrated building was named for two 5th-century Armenian saints whose work in the creation of a national language and the translation of the Bible into Armenian was a major step in the cultural unification of the Armenian people.

JEWETT STREET

- 27-29 Ann Holden House (ca 1855): Two-and-a-half stories high with a gable roof set end to the street, this house has a 3-bay facade, a bracketed hood over the side-hall entrance, and a bracketed cornice. It was built probably as an investment by one of the Holden family soon after the Holden estate—which occupied land bounded by Smith, Promenade, and Holden Streets and I-95—was divided and sold for house lots in 1850.
- 44 Elizabeth T. Brownell House (ca 1855): Greek Revival in style, this 2½-story, flank-gable-roof structure has a hooded double center entrance, corner pilaster strips, and a broad entablature. Double Greek Revival houses are rare in Providence, though a number of Federal and Italianate examples are known. Like other heirs of the Holden estate, Mrs. Brownell chose to build an income-producing structure on her property; she herself occupied half of the building from the early 1870s until her death in 1886.
- 50, 54 Blanchard Tenements (ca 1874): Built by several members of the Blanchard family, these two identical buildings are both 2½-story blocks with flank-gable roofs, center entrances, and regularly spaced bay and sash windows. Flats in these privately owned tenements were rented by workers at the adjacent Brown and Sharpe factory.
- 207-209, 211-213, Malinowitz-Charron Houses (ca 1927): Harry Malinowitz and Max Charron built these four identical two-deckers with

215-217, hip roofs. Similar in style to contemporary three-deckers, which this two-decker form gradually supplemented in the 1920s, these dwellings have 2-story, full-width porches across their facades; shingle-clad parapets in place of balustrades; and short, paired piers rather than columns. Malinowitz and Charron, born into Russian Jewish immigrant families, were both more actively involved in other businesses than real-estate speculation; they both may have grown up on Smith Hill, but, like many other immigrants, had moved away from the ghettos and assimilated themselves into the larger community.

LYDIA STREET

- 55,59,61, Andrew Dickhaut Houses (1891): Seven identical workers' cottages, one-and-a-half stories high with gable roofs set end to the street and 3-bay facades, form a group almost identical to those Dickhaut erected on Bath Street in 1883; only the mirror reversal of plan distinguishes one group from the other.
- 65,67,69, 73
- 99 Robert Pettis House (1893): Two-and-a-half stories high with a 2-bay facade and a gable roof set end to the street, this 2-family house is typical of the many erected by Pettis and other developers in the Smith Hill area. This well preserved example retains its nicely detailed rectangular bay window and heavy hood with pendants over the front door.

MULBERRY STREET

- 19 John B. Hennessey House (ca 1855): This handsome, 2-story Italianate house has a low hip roof and a square central cupola. The 3-bay facade has a hooded center entrance flanked by paired round-head windows. Hennessey was born in Ireland in 1817; and, after immigrating to this country, he married his wife, Margaret, a native of Massachusetts. His success in the grocery business permitted the construction of this substantial dwelling for his family, which included seven children by 1860, and of a commercial block at 209 Douglas Avenue (q.v.) in 1873.

OAKLAND AVENUE

- 83 Henry Boyce House (ca 1873): Two-and-a-half stories high with a hip roof with cross gables, this house has a 3-bay facade with a central entrance flanked by 2-story bay windows. Boyce, a machinist, moved his family to the open spaces of the Oaklands Plat soon after it was first opened for development in 1871.
- 145 Temple Beth David-Anshei Kovno Congregation (1954): Tom Russillo was the architect for this modern brick structure with an applied tristyle pedimented portico. The home of two congregations which merged in 1970, this temple evinces the changing demographics on Smith Hill in this century. Temple Beth David, a Conservative syna-

gogue, was founded on lower Chalkstone Avenue in 1892, where it remained until moving to the present facility. Anshei Kovno Congregation, also established around the turn of the century, was founded by emigrants from Kovno, Lithuania; their synagogue on Orms Street was condemned in 1962 for the construction of I-95, but they continued to worship in the area—at 45 Orms Street—until merging with Temple Beth David in 1970.

- * Oakland Avenue Historic District (ca 1910-1925): The northern portion of Oakland Avenue—and adjacent Sparrow and Eaton Streets and Pembroke Avenue—contains one of the finest concentrations of well preserved three-deckers in Providence. Stylistically these range from a late Queen Anne mode at 97 Oakland Avenue (ca 1910) with bay windows and turned-spindle porches, to a monumental, hip-roof, rectangular box with pier-supported porches across all three stories of the facade. Unlike earlier three-deckers built specifically as working-class tenements, most of these dwellings were designed for middle- and lower middle-class families and featured larger parlors, dining rooms, more bedrooms, and—occasionally—butler's pantries.

ORMS STREET

- 161 J. A. Sheldon House (1871): A trifle more modish than other cottages built contemporarily on Smith Hill, the 1½-story, cross-gable-roof Sheldon House is built on a T-shape plan and makes use of the irregular fenestration and gothicizing influences—like the window detail—then in vogue. Sheldon, a foreman at the nearby American Screw Company plant, moved from nearby on Smith Hill to this house upon its completion.
- 162 Horace Crossman House (ca 1849): This 1½-story, end-gable-roof, Greek Revival cottage is typical of the small dwellings erected on Smith Hill in the 1840s and 1850s. Crossman was a machinist who no doubt worked at one of the nearby mills.
- 216 Yeomans-Oldfield House (1845): Two stories high with a low hip roof above wide eaves, this 1-family dwelling has a 5-bay facade with a center entrance flanked by side lights and crowned with a broad entablature. Yeomans, a baker, built this house on speculation between March and September of 1845, when he sold it to John Oldfield. The 5-bay-facade format, popular in Providence from the mid-18th through mid-19th centuries, is here wedded to the bold plasticity of the emerging aesthetic of Romantic Classicism, exemplified by the heavy lintels and wide eaves.
- 225 Margaret McIver House (ca 1873): This 2½-story mansard-roof house has a bracketed cornice above its 3-bay facade with a bracketed center-entrance portico; a carriage house similar in style to the main house is at the rear of the lot. John McIver, listed as a carpenter in Providence directories, and his family were first listed at this address in 1874; previously they had lived on Benefit and on Cady Streets. McIver's profession suggests that he may have built the house

himself. In scale and style it is more elaborate than other contemporary dwellings in the neighborhood.

- 344 William F. Goff House (ca 1883): Typical of Providence vernacular architecture of the early 1880s, this 2½-story house with a mansard roof has a 2-bay facade with a bracketed entrance portico and a bracketed 2-story bay window. Goff was a machinist and, like many other residents of Smith Hill, probably located here because of the area's proximity to nearby industry.
- *377 Baxter-Dickhaut House (ca 1844): Greek Revival in style, this 1½-story house has a T-shape plan and cross gable roof with a hexagonal cupola at the gable intersection. Nathan Baxter, who built the house, sold it almost immediately, and it changed hands often for forty years until purchased in 1881 by Andrew Dickhaut, who lived here until his death in 1895. The house occupied a large tract of land bounded by Orms, Duke, Smith, and Bath Streets, and Dickhaut, who invested heavily in Smith Hill real estate, built workers' cottages on both the Bath and Duke Streets (q.v.) portions of the original lot.

PARK STREET

- 57 Veterans Memorial Auditorium (1928, 1951): Osgood and Osgood, the architectural firm which specialized in Masonic Temples, designed this structure to replace the 1894 building at the corner of Dorrance and Pine Streets. The classically inspired building, constructed of steel framing with brick and sandstone sheathing, comprises two massive 6-story blocks at an acute angle connected by a smaller trapezoidal block. The eastern block, intended for office space, is articulated on the exterior by Ionic colonnades in antis above a 2½-story, coursed-stone basement. Begun in 1927, construction came to a halt in 1928 after only the walls and roof were completed. The state purchased the property in 1945 with the intention of creating office space and providing performance space. Oresto di Saia was retained as architect for the additions, and the auditorium wing, including office space at the rear, was completed and dedicated as a war memorial in 1951. The auditorium interior, executed in a simplified version of the original plans, is based on late 18th-century Adamesque prototypes. Since its opening, Veterans Auditorium has been the only major concert hall in the state, used for symphonies, recitals, operas, rock concerts, and countless high school graduations. The extremely poor condition of the eastern wing and the hyphen—both untouched since 1928 and now extremely deteriorated—jeopardizes the continuing life of the whole structure.
- 107 Stillman White House (1876): This 2½-story, mansard-roof dwelling with a 2-bay facade comprising a small portico and a bay window is typical of the middle-class dwellings erected in this area in the 1870s. Stillman White, in addition to running his foundry in the Randall Square area, was quite active in local politics, serving in the General Assembly

House of Representatives between 1878 and 1882, on the Common Council of city government, and as a member of the Board of Aldermen. White remained here until his death in 1903. By 1920 the building was used as a rooming house.

- 111 **David A. Cleveland House (1869):** This Second Empire house with a mansard roof above a modillion cornice is built on an L-shape plan; an entrance porch, surmounted by a balustrade, fills the nook of the ell. A 2-story bay window dominates the facade. The house was constructed by one of the partners in Cleveland Brothers, a furniture manufactory located at 110 North Main Street; another brother lived at 194 Smith Street (q.v.).

• PEKIN STREET

Filled with 2½-story, 2-family houses built between 1875 and 1895, Pekin Street's architectural cohesiveness is largely due to the rapidity with which these dwellings were constructed. While these buildings are all quite similar if not identical, some variety of detailing exists: a bracketed hood protects the entrance of 33 Pekin Street while the slightly later house at 13 Pekin has a spindle-work porch with scroll-saw trim. The rapid population growth in Providence and the concomitant building boom on Smith Hill in the 1880s was largely responsible for the construction of large numbers of these 2-family houses.

PLEASANT VALLEY PARKWAY

- 95 **Coca Cola Bottling Company Plant (1939):** Designed by the Atlanta architectural firm of Robert and Company—retained by Coca Cola for its bottling plants—this brick-sheathed steel-frame building replaced an earlier wood-frame facility at 477 Smith Street (q.v.). A 2-story block at the front of the structure contains office space, while bottling machinery and warehouse space occupy the remaining interior space. The office block has a 3-bay facade with center entrance and fenestration connected vertically by concrete spandrels, which are decorated with stylized versions of the company's product. Horizontal bands of casement windows illuminate the plant area. Contemporary with this structure, Coca Cola also built a handsome pier-and-spandrel, reinforced-concrete, Art Deco influenced garage nearby on Valley Street and, in 1941, a reinforced-concrete, horizontally banded garage on Westpark Street. This plant, with others like it constructed between 1927 and 1949, was built from one of a series of plans sanctioned by the Coca Cola Company's committee on standards, which approved designs of all company products.

PROMENADE STREET

- 199 **Rhode Island Normal School, now the Family Court Building (1898):** Martin and Hall designed this Beaux-Arts, terracotta-trimmed, yellow brick structure for use by the rapidly growing Normal School. Four stories high with a flat roof,

the building has a central projecting pavilion flanked by smaller end pavilions; the regular fenestration is articulated by engaged columns and pilaster strips. Built on the site of the first state prison, which had remained vacant between 1878 and the 1890s, this structure was the first built for the school; previously the institution had occupied rented quarters in downtown Providence and, more recently, an old school building on Benefit Street. The school remained here until the Rhode Island College campus was built on Mount Pleasant Avenue in the late 1950s; since then it has been the home of the Family Court and other state offices.

- 199 **Henry Barnard School, Rhode Island College of Education, now the University of Rhode Island Extension Division (1926):** Sited on an axis perpendicular to that of the Normal School Building, the Barnard School Building is a 3-story brick structure with a flat roof. Exterior articulation of the facade is a simplified version of the Normal School's format, with the scale reduced and the wall surface unadorned. Now rehabilitated to continue its use as an educational center, the Barnard School Building was erected to provide additional space for the rapidly growing Rhode Island College of Education.

- *235 **Brown and Sharpe (1870 et seq.):** This complex, bounded by Promenade, Calverly, and Westpark Streets and I-95, comprises a number of brick industrial structures built over an approximately 50-year span. The earliest of these, on the eastern side of Holden Street at Promenade, is a 4-story brick structure on a partially raised basement with pilaster strips separating each of the 20-over-20 windows on the Promenade Street elevation below the corbeled stringcourse between the third and fourth stories; similar strips separate the 9-over-9 windows on the fourth story. Other buildings, varying in height from one to five stories, are similar to this structure. The company, founded as David Brown and Son in 1833, became J. R. Brown and Sharpe in 1853 and moved to this site from smaller quarters on South Main Street in 1870. The company's production of precision machine tools was crucial to the development of industry, and the rapid industrialization of late 19th-century America and the firm's technological advances, such as the universal grinding and milling machines, ensured the rapid expansion of Brown and Sharpe facilities. The company employed a large number of Smith Hill residents, and its departure to North Kingstown in 1964 abetted the decline of Smith Hill. The complex is now used by several state agencies and private businesses.

- 405 **Congdon and Carpenter (1930):** Jenks and Ballou were the consulting engineers for this Art Deco structure built by Charles B. McGuire. Comprising a 1-story flat-roof office block in front of a large, flat-roof production-area block, the reinforced-concrete structure has regularly spaced sash windows in the office and casement windows in the warehouse. Founded in 1792, Congdon and Carpenter operated its metalworks in two locations on Canal Street before

moving to this location. The Congdon family retained control of the steel and aluminum products company until 1977.

RICHTER STREET

Houses (ca 1925): These sixteen multiple-family dwellings are virtually indistinguishable; the basic variation in exterior articulation is in the porch treatment. All the even-number houses and those opposite at 27-29, 31-33, and 35-37 have a bay window the height of the facade and full-width porches attached to the facade; other houses on the street integrate the front porch into the house itself, and the 3rd-story porch is covered by the gable end of the roof. Except for numbers 39-41 (ca 1927) and 41-43, all were built by Max J. Richter, who himself lived in a three-decker at 60 Eaton Street. Richter sold dairy products until the mid-1920s, after which he devoted his time exclusively to building contracting.

RUGGLES STREET

- 110 **Ruggles Street Primary School, now the Smith Hill Center (1896):** Two-and-a-half stories high with a cross-gable roof, this rather simple brick building with stone trim is typical of Providence public schools of the 1890s. Built to relieve pressure on the Smith Street Primary School of 1885 (q.v.), the Ruggles Street Primary School was replaced by a modern facility on Camden Street in the late 1950s. It continues to serve Smith Hill in its recycled use as a neighborhood center with programs for area residents.

SMITH STREET

- 83 **Saint Patrick's Church Complex (1842 et seq.):** Since its founding in the early 1840s, Saint Patrick's parish has been an institution of crucial importance in the Smith Hill neighborhood. A split in the congregation of Saints Peter and Paul (founded 1838), the first Roman Catholic Church in Providence, led Bishop Fenwick of Boston to approve the creation of a second parish in the city. The location of the church on Smith Hill—the East Side being considered too expensive—was of great importance for the development of the area. Largely unpopulated and yet adjacent to the East Side, downtown, and the site of the railroad tracks (1848), Smith Hill provided ample space for the many Irish immigrants who began to arrive in the 1840s. The Sisters of Mercy, a teaching order, came to Saint Patrick's in 1851, and the parish school grew rapidly, requiring the construction of a separate structure in 1871 at 19 Davis Street (q.v.). The following year a 2½-story, mansard-roof convent was erected to provide housing for the Sisters of Mercy; it was demolished in 1979. The present rectory at 38 State Street was erected in 1860; two-and-a-half stories high with a bell-cast mansard roof, the building received a brick veneer in this century. By the turn of the century, Saint Patrick's

- was a large, active parish, and the original structure was believed to be too small: Father William Pyne, the pastor, began plans for a new edifice in 1902, and the neo-Gothic structure designed by Murphy, Hindle and Wright was complete in 1916; it was demolished in 1979. Like many other large parishes, Saint Patrick's not only provided for religious needs, but also sponsored activities for a wide spectrum of ages and interests of its parishioners. The parish continues to play an important role in the Smith Hill community, despite the displacement of much of the congregation by the construction of I-95, the expansion of the state office facilities, and the demolition of the church building because of serious structural decay. The congregation, which is part of the evangelical Roman Catholic movement, now meets in the Saint Patrick's school building at 244 Smith Street (q.v.).
- **90 Rhode Island State House (1895-1904):** A nationally prominent architectural firm, McKim, Mead and White, was responsible for the design of this marble-clad structure in the Beaux-Arts style, of which the firm was the leading exponent in this country. The 3-story structure sits on a rusticated basement, with terraces to the east and west, a paved plaza to the north, and a wide staircase to the south. Each elevation has a central projecting pavilion emphasized by an engaged colonnade. A low parapet surrounds the flat roof, which culminates with a central hemispherical dome, supported by a tall drum, surrounded by four, smaller, similar domes. The highlight of the interior is the rotunda, approached by trapezoidal foyers on the north and south, with cross-axial staircases which provide access to the main governmental chambers on the second floor. While inspired by other capitols—notably the United States Capitol—the Rhode Island State House is an extremely sophisticated interpretation of the prototype, eminently suited to its site, and remains the state's outstanding monument to itself.
- 133 State Office Building (1928, 1935):** Jackson, Robertson and Adams, designers of a number of stone-trimmed, red-brick, Georgian Revival structures in Providence, were the architects for this 3-story building based on late 18th-century models. An engaged colonnade embellishes the first two stories of the facade, and a parapet along the edge of the flat roof partially screens the set-back third story. Enlarged in 1935, the building is basically square in plan with an open, central, parking court. In contrast to its pretentious exterior, the State Office Building's interiors are extremely utilitarian, except for the Adamesque foyer. Built to relieve the pressure of an expanding bureaucracy on the State House, the State Office Building replaced the finest Federal mansion on Smith Hill, the Colonel Henry Smith House (1800).
- 147 Goff's Grocery Block (1873):** This mansard-roof, 2½-story commercial-residential building has an irregular pentagonal plan to accommodate it to its site at the corner of Smith and Jefferson Streets. While the original store fronts are now somewhat altered, the block retains much of its original appearance. This type of structure, once quite common on major thoroughfares through the neighborhood, is now relatively rare, though a number of buildings have been raised or altered to achieve the same end.
- 194 Charles S. Cleveland House (1871):** Two-and-a-half stories with a high hip roof and gable dormers above a broad entablature and modillion cornice, this house has a 2-bay facade with a bracketed hood over the entrance and a 2-story bay window. Following the division of the Holden Estate, Cleveland built this substantial dwelling just west of the Holden Homestead (now the site of I-95). Cleveland—with his brother David, who lived nearby at 111 Park Street (q.v.)—was a partner in Cleveland Brothers Furniture Company on North Main Street.
- Jonathan Tucker Houses (ca 1851):** Both of these similar 3-bay, 2½-story houses with gable roofs set end to the street were built by Tucker, a deputy sheriff, soon after the Holden Estate Plat was opened for development in 1850. Number 206 Smith Street shows the hallmarks of the Greek Revival style in its plan and its handsome Ionic entrance portico, while 200 Smith has Italianate detailing, including a bracketed hood over the entrance, round-head windows in the attic story, and modillion raking and eaves cornices.
- 221 Sterling Service Oil Company Station (ca 1925):** This 1-story, stuccoed structure with large, multiple-pane windows and pantile roof is typical of the early gasoline stations built to service the rapidly proliferating automobiles of the 1920s. As early as 1908, Smith Street was shown in the Automobile Club of Rhode Island's "Red Book" as the major northwest route out of Providence to Putnam, Connecticut, and Springfield, Massachusetts. The use of Smith Street as a major artery made it desirable for service stations and garages, such as that at 558 Smith (q.v.) and, by the 1950s, Smith Street abounded with automobile-oriented businesses, many of them clustered at major intersections, thus occupying key corner sites and thereby diminishing the visual quality of Smith Street.
- 244 Saint Patrick's School (1928):** By the 1920s, the facilities at Saint Patrick's Church at 83 Smith Street (q.v.) had become too cramped for the large parish and in 1927 the cornerstone of this 2-story, steel-frame, brick structure, designed by John F. Hogan, was laid. The symmetrical building has a central entrance with a broken-scroll pediment flanked by banks of sash windows; the surfaces of the projecting end pavilions are unarticulated. Built on the Jones Lot (the site of circuses and other traveling shows in the late 19th century), Saint Patrick's School provided expanded educational facilities for parish children. Because of the disintegration of the neighborhood and parish caused by the construction of I-95 and in the 1960s, Saint Patrick's was forced to close the school in 1970. The Word of God Community, an evangelical movement, became active at Saint Patrick's in the early 1970s, and the school reopened as Saint Patrick's Word of God School in the fall of 1972 and continues to educate children of Smith Hill. Further, because of structural deterioration of the church at 83 Smith Street, the school building is now used for worship services.
- 326 Allen B. Smith House (1864):** A modest 2-story house with a flank-gable roof, 5-bay facade, and center entrance with side and transom lights, this vernacular dwelling was erected in one of the earlier western settlements on Smith Street. Smith was listed as a pattern maker in the 1860s, but by 1875 he was running a saloon at the back of his property, on Orms Street.
- 334 Sheffield Smith House (1855):** This 2½-story dwelling is distinguished by its almost whimsical use of Italianate detailing wedded to a Greek Revival form. The 5-bay, center-entrance facade is articulated into a narrow entrance bay (containing the hooded entrance and tall round-head window above) and two larger flanking bays (containing sash windows with heavy lintels) by colossal pilasters with clustered brackets serving as capitals. Smith, a quarryman, built the first house in this area on the 1854 Hawes Plat. While the central round-head window—once part of an even more elaborate window complex—has been altered and the cupola removed, the house still retains much of its original detailing.
- *396 Smith Street Primary School (1885):** A handsome example of the Queen Anne style, the picturesque quality of the 2½-story brick structure is greatly enhanced by its contrived siting: the irregularly massed building is turned at an angle to Smith Street, and one corner of the basement is cut along a 45-degree angle at the sidewalk line; above the basement, the wall is corbeled to form a right angle. While the steeple has been removed from the tower, the building retains much of its original detailing, including floriated terra-cotta decorative trim. Replaced as a public school by the Camden Street Elementary School, the Smith Street Primary School is still used by the city as offices for Adult Education, Senior Citizen, and School Health Departments.
- 409 John Healy House (ca 1900):** A large, late Queen Anne, multiple-family dwelling with a cross-gable roof and prominent semi-octagonal corner turret, the Healy House was built by a machinist who lived here with his family and rented out the rest of the units.
- 477 Coca Cola Bottling Plant (ca 1920):** The first Providence Coca Cola plant, this 1½-story, hip-roof, frame structure was built by the company and used between 1920 and the completion of the present facility on Pleasant Valley Parkway in 1939 (q.v.).
- 488 Joy Village Restaurant, formerly Olivo's Diner (1949):** One story high with a flat roof and "log cabin" sheathing, the building has a center entrance flanked by tripartite plate-glass windows on its facade below a tack-on hip-roof hood. Built as Olivo's Diner, the building has housed Chinese restaurants since 1953. With one of the most arresting store fronts on Smith Hill, the restaurant occupies the best example of "decorated shed" architecture in the survey area. This type of architecture, now quite common throughout

the United States and epitomized in Las Vegas, relies on the application of ornamentation to the facade of an otherwise anonymous structure, usually to connote the use of the building. With Olivo's Diner, no connotative message is readily established by the log cabin store front, and the further change in use of the building with retention of the original store front only further intensifies its contradictory complexity.

- 558 **Elmhurst Garage (1931)**: One story high with a flat roof behind the parapet on the facade, this brick pier-and-spandrel garage has a 3-bay facade with a center automobile entrance flanked by large plate-glass windows. As automobile ownership increased rapidly following the First World War, the need for neighborhood repair shops was met by structures such as this one, which provided more complete automobile repair facilities than the small gasoline stations such as that at 221 Smith Street (q.v.).
- *581 **Charles Dowler House II (1872)**: This elaborately decked out, L-plan, mansard-roof cottage, prominently sited at the corner of Smith Street and Oakland Avenue, has richly detailed exterior articulation, including fish-scale shingling on the roof, incised Eastlake detailing on the dormers, an oculus window in the mansard, imaginative Corinthian colonettes on the porch, and several bay windows. Dowler, who came to this country from England in the early 1860s to produce arms for the Civil War, first lived at 83 Camden Street (q.v.) until building this more elaborate dwelling. After the Civil War, Dowler turned to sculpture, designing the Collyer Monument in Pawtucket and the John Sparks Monument in Bristol among other works, and by the end of the century listed himself in Providence directories as a designer of interior and exterior decorations, models for monumental work, and patterns for jewelry. After his retirement in 1919—at seventy-eight—he took up painting; he died here in 1931. His house, possessing all the whimsical charm of a holiday-time gingerbread house, epitomizes what, in the popular imagination, is thought of as the quintessential Victorian dwelling.

SPARROW STREET

- *11-13 **Houses (1925)**: These five, nearly identical three-deckers were constructed in 1925: the three on the north side of the street by Max J. Richter, developer of Richter Street (q.v.), and the two on the south side by the Volpe family.
- 15-17
16-18
19-21
20-22 Typical examples of 1920s three-deckers, the facades of these buildings have a large bay window to one side, full-width porches, and a wide-eave end-gable roof. The only difference between the two groups is the use of paired columns on the porches of the Richter buildings.

VIOLET STREET

- 37 **Cottage (1871)**: Built as an investment property by Robert Arnett, a machinist who lived at 4 Penn Street, this story-and-a-half cottage has a cross-gable roof and a 2-bay facade with a hooded entrance and bay window. It is typical of the small, 1-family dwellings erected in the years following the Civil War.

WESTPARK

- 6-8 **Charles F. Hull House (1873)**: Two-and-a-half stories high with a mansard roof, this house has a two-bay facade with a side-hall entrance and two-story bay window. The first-story porch is a later addition. Hull was a partner in the Charles F. and John M. Hull Building Company.
- 11 **Christopher G. Dodge House (1858)**: Built on a knoll, one story above street level, this imposing 3-story Italianate house has a 3-bay facade, a bracketed cornice, and wide eaves. The center entrance, flanked by bay windows on the first floor, is reached by twin stone staircases with fine, wrought-iron balustrades. The carriage house, now heavily altered, still stands at 95 Holden Street. Dodge, the owner of a dyeworks, bought the land in 1853 from the Holden Estate and moved his family into their new home upon its completion five years later. The house remained in the family until the last years of the 19th century, but by 1901 it had been converted to a rooming house.

ZONE STREET

- 12, 14,
18, 22,
26, 30,
34, 38,
42, 46,
57, 51,
52, 55,
59, 61 **The Burnside Row (1866-1867)**: Built by Levi D. Bates, contractor, for E. P. Mason, G. M. Richmond, and Dr. A. H. Okie, partners in the Rhode Island Locomotive Works, these sixteen identical dwellings housed that company's workers. Two-and-a-half stories high, gable end to the street, each has a 3-bay facade and side-hall entrance plan—this form is prototypical of late 19th-century mass housing. This group of houses is the only example of company-owned housing on Smith Hill; such housing was, in fact, unusual in industrial centers as large as Providence, though quite common in smaller mill villages.

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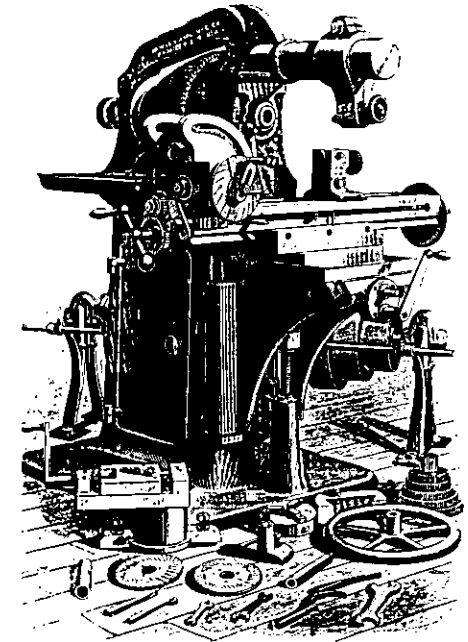


FIG 78— No. 3 UNIVERSAL MILLING MACHINE

Fig. 67: Brown & Sharpe Universal Milling Machine Number 3.

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