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This house, built in 18h5-18h7, is basically square in plan, varied only by slight projections on the north and south, a minor recess on the west and a service wing at the east. It is constructed of brick (originally painted beige) with sandstone cornices, brackets, string-courses and window dressings. Architectural ornamentation in the form of porches, balconies, hoods etc. is of wood. The cubic mass of the house is broken up by variations in the height and roof treatment of its parts, which in some places are of two or two-and-a-half storeys, in others three storeys (one three-storey part being taller than the other). Both hip and gable roofs are used with intentional contrast. The variations in height produce the effect of a rectangular tower rising in the south-west portion of the house. The other variations in height and plane, together with porches and differences in window treatment produce, finally, an asymmetrical effect--a desired feature of the "Italian Villa" style.

An arcaded porch was formerly at the south-west corner of the house in an angle caused by the short southerly projection of one room. To the east of this projection another porch, carried on square posts, ran around the corner and across most of the back of the house. Both porches were not mere appendages, but formed parts of the over-all architectural composition: so their absence must be noted. A small number of roundheaded dormers long ago let into certain parts of the roof do not show in the original design; yet they are minor intrusions rather than serious alterations.

In spite of apparent exterior asymmetry, the first-floor plan is, as mentioned, very nearly square. A long central entrance- and stairhall takes up one third of the width of the house and is divided into two parts by a triple arcade. Flanking the hall are two drawing-rooms to the south, a dining-room (its interior remodelled) and a large tutler's pantry to the north. Across the rear of the house from south to north are a library, "office," service stair and kitchen, with a large laundry room projecting east from the kitchen. The plan of the second, or bedroom, floor is quite similar to that of the first, and quarters for servants were arranged at the top of the three-storey parts of the house. Interior trim has survived and has the plain, heavy characteristics of the 1815-1855 period. There are strong cornices, mouldings and windowtrim, marble mantels, but no elaborate carved or sawed work. Floors in some cases are inlaid.

The grounds of the house slope upward from Spring Street, the "villa" being located on their crest. There were various ancillary buildings of wood--gatehouse, stable etc.; but with two exceptions these have disappeared, as has an interestingly treated brick wall surrounding the property, though the heavy, rusticated stone gate piers remain. These grounds now comprise Aquidneck Park, its lower slope occupied by a new public library. Following long residential use the King House itself for a lengthy period housed the public library. When this use

(See Continuation Sheet)

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

The Edward King House has importance now as a handsome example of a particular style of XIX Century architecture. But this is not an importance acquired only through age, for this house has been important in American architecture ever since it was first designed and built.

Its architect, Richard Upjohn, was a very great figure in the national development of his profession. He had a considerable influence on public, official and ecclesiastical taste in buildings and styles and was founder of the American Institute of Architects. As a design from his hand the building is of great intrinsic and historic value. It is the one "Italian Villa" which more than any others has been cited and illustrated in architectural publications. A. J. Downing gave it several pages, five illustrations and extravagant praise in his widely used book <u>The Architecture of Country Houses</u>. Adaptations of its exterior design were frequent. Through repeated mention and illustration in modern architectural histories, it has come to be considered a prototype of the "Italian Villa Style," even though it was not the very first example built.

It shows the beginning in large dwellings (and public buildings as well) of the break with traditional symmetry of design and regularity of plan. Here, freedom in plan and outline is first starting to become evident, as is variety in the placement of ornament. In this development one finds masses and spaces pulled out, pushed in, balanced and juxtaposed, manoeuvred in their relationships of weight and height. These masses-generally intended to appear monumental-were usually quite plain in surface. At the time of the King House, ornamentation was simple but big in scale: heavy and projecting bracketed cornices, arcades with robust piers, impressive but severe window and entrance trim. Detail may be Italianate, often correctly academic, but it is certainly never placed or spaced according to the old academicism.

Reflected in such a house as this are also other things--the need in a very prosperous America for big houses, more rooms for varied uses, the desire to emerge from the somewhat cramping rectangularity

(See Continuation Sheet)

EE INSTRUCTIONS

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Form 10-300a (July 1969) UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE Rhole Island

COUNTY

INATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

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7. Description.

recently terminated, the house underwent outside repair and sympathetic internal renovation (though not a complete restoration) and is now a community centre for older persons.

8. Significance.

of earlier defined styles, unaccommodating to this expanded living. Additionally, there were desires for more light and air--rooms with several exposures; for more outdoor living--porches, verandahs, balconies. There was a desire, too, to impress the spectator. All of these desires are fulfilled in the King House.

As said, this house was sufficiently admired in its day to produce many near-copies and close adaptations, of which one (G. M. Bradley House, Providence, c. 1850-1855) is a sort of compliment to Upjohn by another talented and imaginative architect, Thomas Tefft. Upjohn and a Baltimore client both so liked the King design that Upjohn reproduced it there, almost exactly in mirror-image, as "Homewood Villa"--needlessly demolished by Johns Hopkins University quite recently. It is more than lucky that the King House survives, and highly important that it shall continue to do so.

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1939), n. 19.			
Architecture, Nineteenth a	and Twe	entieth Centuries (Ba	altimore, 1958),
pp. 103, 105,	~ £		
Downing, A. J.: The Architectur	re,Cou	ntry Houses (New York	<pre>c, 1865), pp. 317-</pre>
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Downing, Antoinette F., and Scu	ully, Y	lincent J., Jr.: The	Architectural
Heritage of Newport (Ca	ambrid	ge, Mass., 1952), pp.	. 123-124.
Upjohn, Everard: Richard Upjohr	n, Arcl	nitect and Churchman	(New York, 1939),
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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Edward King House is a large two-and-one-story brick residence. The structure is flanked by three-story towers of varying height with pyramidal roofs projecting on heavy stone brackets. The design is asymmetrical, on an almost square plan (about 65 feet wide by 70 feet deep). The sharply cut masses of the two front square towers are organized asymmetrically around the two-and-one-half story central entrance loggia, while a lower two-story mass with gabled roof projects from the center of the south side and a three-story square tower projects to the north from near the northeast (rear) corner. Second story balconies with elaborate canopies are massed, as are all the details, in keeping with the monumental scale of the whole composition. The numerous windows are chiefly round-arched, but there are also some of the flat-arched pedimented type.

Andrew Jackson Downing, in his The Architecture of Country Houses (1850), 317-21, described the Edward King House, under the heading of

"A Villa in the Italian Style," as follows:

"This beautiful villa, the residence of Edward King, Esq., of Newport, Rhode Island, was constructed in 1845, from the designs of Mr. Upjohn of New York. ш С

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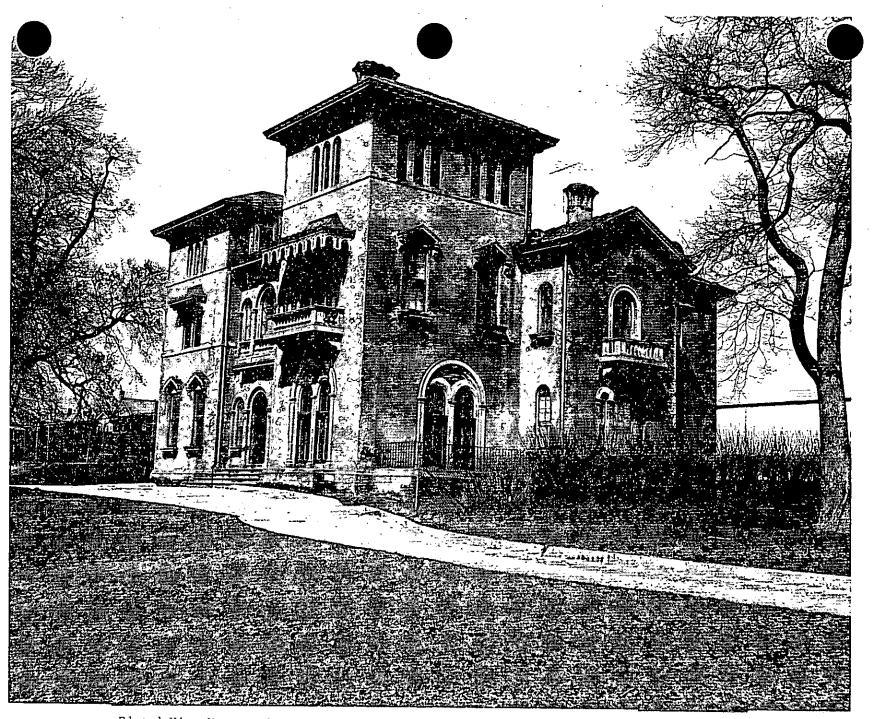
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"It is one of the most successful specimens of the Italian style in the United States, and unites beauty of form and expression with spacious accommodation, in a manner not often seen, and which is very creditable to Mr. Upjohn.

"The first impression which this villa makes on the mind is, that of its being a gentleman's residence. There is dignity, refinement, and elegance, about all its leading features. It next indicates varied enjoyments, and a life of refined leisure - especially abounding, as it does, with evidences of love of social pleasures.

"In a more strictly architectural sense, the exterior of this villa is worthy of note, for the <u>harmony</u> which pervades it. Notwithstanding the great variety of forms in the windows introduced - a variety which denotes different uses in various apartments - the predominance of the round arch in the majority of the leading apertures, whether in windows, doors, or verandas, restores harmony throughout the whole - while it produces an effect, as regards the details, quite different from that which results from the simplicity of most facades. Both are pleasing, but, to a highly cultivated taste, the satisfaction derived from harmony growing out of variety, is as much greater than that arising from uniformity and simplicity, in architecture as in music, where the first may be illustrated by one of Beethoven's symphonies, and the last by the simple melody of a ballad.

"The sky outline of this villa has the characteristic irregularity of the Italian school of design, and the grouping of the whole is a good study for a young architect who is embarrassed how to treat a large square mass of building, - for the ground plan is nearly square. The chimney-tops and



Edward King House, Newport, Rhode Island

NPS Photo 1970

Form 10-300a (July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL	REGISTER	0F	HISTORIC PLACES
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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Rhode Island	
COUNTY	
Newport	
FOR NPS USE ON	LY
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
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7. Description

(Number all entries)

Continued

page 1

heavy cornice, all of stone, are in excellent taste, and the arcades and verandas have been introduced subordinately, and yet so as to greatly increase the effect.

"Accommodation. An inspection of the plan of the principal floor will show that this is a villa of the first class. On entering the [center] hall, an arcade, supported by four columns, separates the vestibule or entrancehall from the main hall. In the latter, which is spacious, and lighted by a skylight of colored glass, one is struck by the fine effect of the ample staircase [with symmetrical divided flights], rising by easy flights, with broad landings. On the right [south] of the hall is a fine suite of rooms parlor, drawing-room and library; on the left are the dining-room, housekeeper's room (with pantries), kitchen, laundry, etc.

"In an entry, at the rear of the main hall, is placed the servants' staircase.

"We have not given the plan of the second floor, but, it will be readily imagined, there is an abundance of sleeping apartments, with rooms for domestics on the third story of the higher [tower] portions of the building.

"Construction. This villa is built, throughout, in a very solid and excellent manner. The walls are of brick, painted externally of a light freestone color [-only traces of this coat of paint remain today], and the windowdressings, string-courses, cornices, brackets, etc., are all freestone. The effect is more real and satisfactory than that of any other mode of building, except it be of solid stone - and that stone one of an agreeable tone of color..."

First floor rooms have high ceilings and parquet floors, the mantels are of marble, and the moldings are simple and heavy. The Edward King House is little-altered and in good condition. The first-floor is used as a Senior Citizen Center and is also open to visitors.



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PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	16th Century	18th Century	20th Century
15th Century	17th Century	19th Century	
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Designed by Richard Upjohn and erected in 1845-47, the Edward King House is an early, excellent, and little-altered example of a monumentally-scaled and asymmetrically-massed brick residence in the Italian Villa style.

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Plans for the Edward King House were prepared by the noted architect Richard Upjohn of New York City and the structure was built in 1845-47. The residence remained in the possession of the King family until 1912, when the house and land were given to the City of Newport for use as a library and public park. The interior of the northeast (rear) section, which once contained the kitchen and pantries, was converted into closed stack space by lining interior walls with cement from first floor to roof and by inserting glass floors. Opened as the People's Library in 1914, the house served this function until October 1968, when a modern library building was completed. The Edward King House has been used since 1968 as a Senior Citizen Center.

Form 10-300a	UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR	STATE			
(July 1969)	NATIONAL PARK SERVICE	Rhode Island			
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and Cul	tural History (Boston	and Tor	onto, 1961), 99, 170.	
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Edward King House, Newport, Rhode Island

NPS Photo 1970

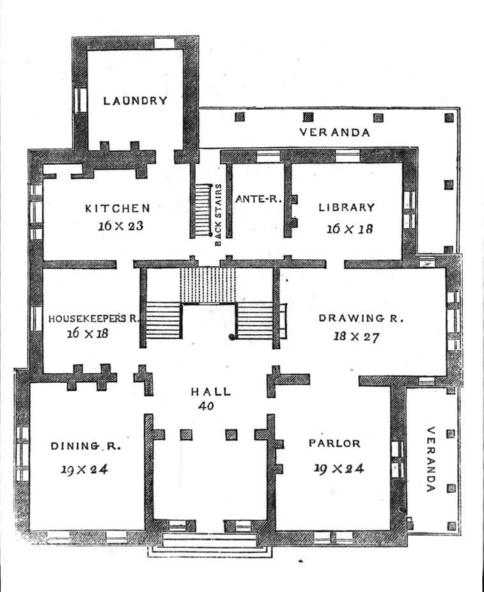


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	View from the south-west in 1970, showing the house minus two wooden porches on the south and with small added dormers, but otherwise unchanged from the Downing view of 1850.							



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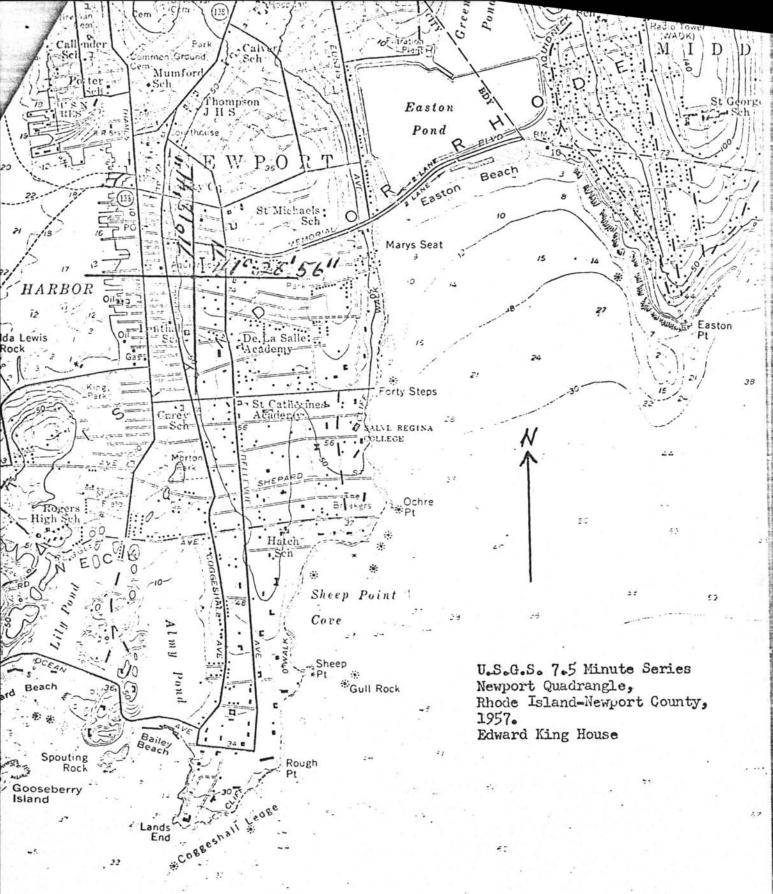
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