

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

### 1. Name of Property

historic name: Columbus

other name/site number:

### 2. Location

street & number: Elmwood Avenue (at Columbus Park)

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Providence vicinity: N/A

state: RI county: Providence code: 007 zip code: 02907

### 3. Classification

Ownership of Property: public-local

Category of Property: object

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
<u>1</u>	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: Outdoor Sculpture of Rhode Island, 1851-present

Property name Columbus, Providence County, Providence, RI

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

Frederick C. Williamsen

Signature of certifying official

Date 3/22/01

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

\_\_\_ entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined eligible for the  
National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the  
National Register

\_\_\_ removed from the National Register

\_\_\_ other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: work of art

Current: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: work of art

Property name Columbus, Providence County, Providence, RI

## 7. Description

Architectural Classification:

NA

Other Description:

Materials: foundation \_\_\_\_\_ roof \_\_\_\_\_  
walls \_\_\_\_\_ other METAL/bronze

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

X See continuation sheet.

## 8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: statewideApplicable National Register Criteria: A & CCriteria Considerations (Exceptions): FAreas of Significance: ArtPeriod(s) of Significance: 1893Significant Dates: 1893

Significant Person(s):

Cultural Affiliation:

Architect/Builder: Bartholdi, Auguste (sculptor)

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X See continuation sheet.

Property name Columbus, Providence County, Providence, RI

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property: less than one

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>19</u>	<u>298460</u>	<u>4630010</u>	B		
C	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	D		

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description:  See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification:  See continuation sheet.

**11. Form Prepared By**

Name/Title: Ronald J. Onorato

Organization: R.I. Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission Date: 4/99

Street & Number: 150 Benefit Street Telephone: 401-874-2769

City or Town: Providence State: RI ZIP: 02903

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### Description

This is a larger-than-life-size standing bronze figure of Columbus, set on a simple stepped granite base. Sculpted by Auguste Bartholdi and cast at the Gorham Manufacturing Company's nearby foundry, the monument was erected in 1893. It is located at the center of a tiny park in the midst of a busy commercial intersection on the south side of Providence.

The figure of Columbus stands 6'8" high and 4'6" wide and deep; the base is 5'3" by 5'4". The explorer is caught in mid-stride, his left foot stepping off the base. In his left hand he holds a globe; his right arm is raised, his index finger pointing, as if giving an order or sighting land. Columbus wears a short tunic; a wide belt wraps the waist; a second belt across the hip holds a sword. A short full cloak billows out around the figure, and he wears a brimmed hat. There is a coil of line at his feet.

The plain square base is grey Westerly granite. The explorer's name is carved in raised letters across the front. On the right side of the base are the raised numerals "1492"; on the left side is "1893." There is a small bronze swag mounted on the front of the base beneath the name.

There is some chipping on the lower edge of the base. The tail ends of the bronze swag are missing. The bronze figure shows some very small cracks but is in generally good condition.

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### Significance

Columbus (1893) is historically significant because it is a good example of the work of a master sculptor, Auguste Bartholdi, and because its creation illustrates some significant events in the history of Rhode Island's Gorham Manufacturing Company, one of the nation's leading fabricators of bronze sculptures.

This Columbus is a bronze cast of a work originally produced in sterling silver at the Gorham Company's plant. The sculpture was created by Gorham for the 1892 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The company had been casting large statues for only a few years and the Columbus was something of a demonstration piece for Gorham—it was large, technically difficult to cast in silver, and the work of a well known artist. In preparing for the exposition, a Gorham team had traveled to France to meet with Bartholdi, renowned for his statue of Liberty. Bartholdi's finished model was shipped across the Atlantic to be cast in Providence. The sculpture was made in two sections and used 30,000 ounces of silver. The casting was a ceremonial occasion—invited guests were feted as they watched the process. The completed work was shipped to Chicago via rail and accompanied by Gorham officials.

Following the exposition, Columbus was returned to the Gorham plant and was melted down—it had never been intended as a permanent work (sterling silver being an impractical material for an outdoor piece) and had served its purpose as a temporary celebration and as an advertisement for the skill and ambition of Gorham's foundry teams.

The bronze Columbus here nominated was created in 1893 and dedicated on November 8 of that year. Bartholdi visited Newport around this time and may have had some involvement in the foundry production. This Columbus was a gift to the City of Providence from the Elmwood Association, a civic group from the residential neighborhood near the Gorham plant. No other work by Bartholdi is known in Rhode Island. Though Gorham often produced multiple casts of works it had commissioned, no other cast of the Columbus has been identified.

Though commemorative in nature, Columbus has also achieved historical significance, both as the work of a master and as a document in the history of the Gorham Manufacturing Company.

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Major Bibliographical References

The Echo, Providence, 1979.

Freeman, Robert, and Vivienne Lasky. Hidden Treasure: Public Sculpture in Providence. Providence, 1980.

Gorham Company Archives. John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, RI.

"Outdoor Sculpture of Rhode Island," technical report, Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 1998.

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Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundary of the nominated property is the land on which the sculpture sits.

Boundary Justification

While the Columbus retains integrity of location, its setting has changed over time. The significance of the work is not dependent upon its setting but is encompassed within the object itself.



Columbus  
Elmwood Avenue  
Providence, RI

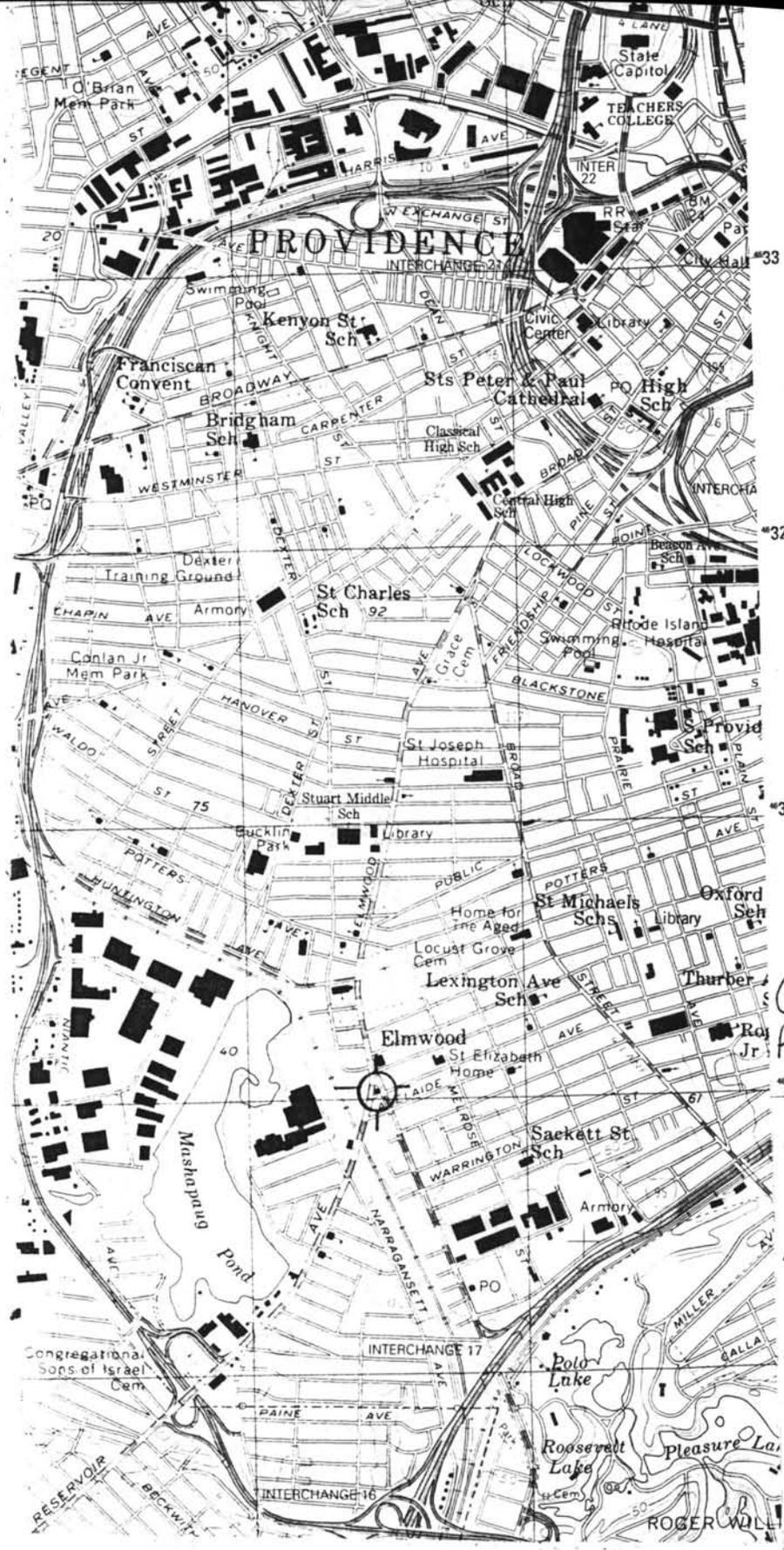
Photographer: Ronald J. Onorato

date: 5/99

Negative: RIHP+HC  
150 Benefit St.  
Providence, RI

View: Looking south

Photo # 1 of 1



*Columbus  
 Providence County  
 Providence, RI  
 19-298460-4630010*