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PSP CELEBRATES 10 YEARS AT BAKER-HANLEY HOUSE

In July 1999 the PSP purchased the Johnathan Baker House at 67 Park Place which was a large undertaking for an organization whose net worth was only \$3000. As they say, since then a lot of water has gone over the dam. Our newsletters have reported on the improvements made to the building over the years so we will view our purchase from a broader and longer perspective. The area around Wilkinson Park was called The Common and in the early 1800s this was the fashionable place to build a house. St. Paul's Episcopal Church was located here and large homes were built until the 1890s. The Jonathan Baker house was built in 1823; however, Mr. Baker didn't live there long as a financial bust of 1829 severely affected Pawtucket industry and business.

What makes the house noteworthy is that this is the oldest brick residence on the west side of the Blackstone River and was actually part of North Providence at the time of construction. For 100 years the house was used for residential purposes, and it received an addition in the 1880s. It was not until 1949 that Dr. and Mrs. Henry Hanley were able to start major improvements on the house that they had purchased in 1943. Beginning in 2002 the PSP began to rehabilitate the first floor for new rental space and make minor changes to convert the 2nd from residence to offices with the assistance of the Pawtucket Redevelopment Agency, City of Pawtucket, major funding contributors, and United Cerebral Palsy. One thing that we have learned is that repairing buildings in a proper way is not inexpensive; however, competitive bidding and capable contractors have been equal to the task.

Now when you walk in Wilkinson Park or drive by on Park Place you can see an older building with some sense of style (Federal) in good condition, and the PSP is pleased to be a part of the improvements to the downtown area. Will we be here permanently? Well, we have 7 years to go with our special mortgage so at a future time we may wish to sell and move into playing a different role in the community. One variation is as a smaller organization which has a revolving rehabilitation loan fund for historic residences. Another idea is to have some yet undetermined relationship



97 Walcott Street Read-Ott House. Built in 1842 and remodeled 1914-15 by Joseph Ott, the founder of Royal Weaving Company. A Greek Revival-Italianate House given Georgian Revival Details in the early 20th Century.

with the Elizabeth Johnson Pawtucket History Research Center at 30 Fruit Street. In conclusion, ten years ago the financial climate was more receptive to the purchase and improvement of a historic building, and Pawtucket and the PSP benefited from that decade of prosperity. The next decade will be challenging and we look forward to it.

STATION WATCH

No activity has occurred at the former Central Falls-Pawtucket Station. However, there has been a giant step taken toward the goal of having an MBTA stop in Pawtucket when a new station stop was selected located between Dexter Street and Conant Street. The City is using its proceeds from the sale of the Lynch Ice Arena to fund the local share of the necessary studies. This site has the advantage of allowing commuter trains to stop off of the Amtrak's Northeast Corridor. This station stop will add to the appeal of a large amount of space at the Thread Works (Coast & Clark Mill) located in Pawtucket and Central Falls.

ENDANGERED BUILDINGS

The owners of the Read-Ott House 97 Walcott Street were in Housing Court on November 21st to answer charges of peeling paint. The case was continued until the Spring when it is possible to correct the defects. The issue boils down to specific areas to be corrected not a requirement to paint the entire building. Please just do it and drop all this talk about demolishing the building. A maintenance and reuse plan for the building is needed. We sadly recognize that the Board of the To Kalon Club has closed the building. Hopefully a new owner can be found for this building which will be able to take advantage of the vacant land created by the loss of St. George's Church. Here is one challenging project. By the way have you ever been to Patriot Place the commercial area created next to Gillette Stadium? A fraction of that investment would do wonders for the inner cities.

NEW PSP WEB SITE

The PSP contracted to have a new web site constructed, and it is now in operation at pawtucketpreservation.com. It contains new information and a display of all of the marker houses.



24 Walnut Street (1910) William Park House. A Tudor Revival Style house built for the Pawtucket Manager of the Industrial Trust Company.

The display of marker houses was done as part of the 30th anniversary of the organization and just carried over to the web site. As new homes are selected they will be added to the photo gallery.

An application for the marker program is included, and there are links to other preservation related sites. Future events are also given on the website.

HOME CONTRACTING

The Pawtucket Library had a two part program on building contractors. We learned that building contractors are not licensed in Rhode Island; however, plumbers and electricians are licensed trades.

Contractors just pay their fee and there is no test as to competency. So homeowners need to rely on reviewing references and visiting the actual sites. The Society keeps information on successful renovations.

WINTER WONDERLAND

We visited the Winter Wonderland in Slater Park on the last night of operation and ended up in the Looff Carousel. It was cold but happy scene in the Carousel with everyone taking a last ride on the animals until spring. We saw that the ceiling of the building was repainted as promised, but particularly we were again impressed by the professional painting of the animals done over the years. Congratulations to Parks Superintendent Bill Mulholland and the Parks Commission.

PAWTUCKET RIVER BRIDGE PROJECT

The project is scheduled to begin in mid 2010 with the creation of an expanded George St.-School St. entrance/exit. The RIDOT went through a process of determining if Native American artifacts and historic structures are within the area of activity of the bridge and there were none. The two buildings identified as being eligible for the National Register are the Apex Department Store and the former Wm Toole Co. warehouse on Pleasant Street. The historical documentation on both buildings was impressive and will be given to the Elizabeth Johnson Pawtucket History Research Center.

AT THE SLATER MILL

The Slate Mill Association will be celebrating the 200th anniversary of the building of the Wilkinson Mill. This stone building was built in 1810 by Oziel Wilkinson as a tool and machinery plant for the

textile industry. The building was renovated in the mid 60s by the Old Slater Mill Association and the Pawtucket Redevelopment Agency. A celebration is planned for June 24th.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The Society will begin its 2010 membership drive early in the year. Our mailing goes to all present members, some 100 owners of PSP Marker houses, and owners of properties located in the local Historic District. We thank you for past support.

MARKER HOUSE PROGRAM

The Marker Committee-Carol Jackson, Carol Wooten, Aaron Usher, Richard Canedo, and Paul Mowrey met in January and approved four houses as eligible for house markers: 188 Rhode Island Avenue, 10 Blodgett Avenue, 161 Walcott Street, and 126 Blaisdell Avenue. The owners will decide whether to purchase the marker and we hope to make presentations during May and National Preservation month.

ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of the organization will be held on Thursday, April 1st. We are hoping to have as a venue a restaurant located within the Hope Artiste Village Complex. More information will follow and will be posted on the web site.

MAY PRESERVATION MONTH

We look forward to recognizing preservation activities going on in each of the neighborhoods in Pawtucket at this event. If you have a structure that you would like to nominate please contact us.

DOWNTUCKET

The following positive activities are going on in the downtown or shall we say Downtucket area. The office/commercial building at 228 Main Street (Wm. Toole Bldg.) has been sold and a commercial fabrics and design store will be opening. Work proceeds at 23 Broad Street (McDevitt Bldg) as exterior and interior improvements are made. Work continues at Union Lofts residential complex on Goff Avenue. The Slater Cotton residential complex on Pine Street has opened in 2009 and the building is renting apartments.

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Chairman Frederick R. Love was given the Antoinette Downing Volunteer Award for his twenty years of service on the Pawtucket Historic District Commission.



25 Main Street To Kalon Club (1908). Georgian Revival Style and built for a private social club founded in 1867. The building is a contributing structure to the Quality Hill National Register Historic District.

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Preservation Society of Pawtucket

P.O. Box 735
Pawtucket, RI 02862

401.725.9581
fax 726.0973

e-mail:
pawtucket@preservation.
necoxmail.net

www.pawtucket
preservation.com