

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 9/19/44 0023	DATE 9/10/51

1. NAME

COMMON:
 The Elms

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Berwind (Edward J.) House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
Bellevue Avenue, between Bellevue Court and Dixon Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE: Rhode Island, 02840 CODE: 44 COUNTY: Newport CODE: 005

3. CLASSIFICATION

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

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
The Preservation Society of Newport County

STREET AND NUMBER:
37 Touro Street

CITY OR TOWN: Newport STATE: Rhode Island, 02840 CODE: 44

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:
Broadway

CITY OR TOWN: Newport STATE: Rhode Island, 02840 CODE: 44

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:

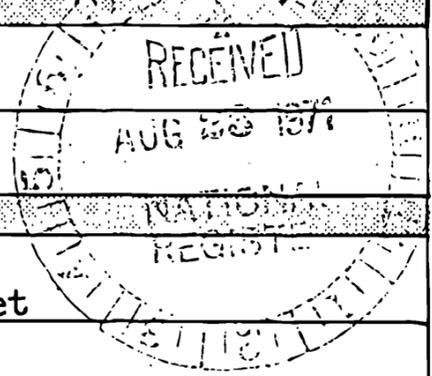
DATE OF SURVEY: Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Elms was commissioned in 1899 by Edward J. Berwind and was completed in 1901, the architect being Horace Trumbauer of Philadelphia, a devotee and talented exponent of the French neo-classical style of the later XVIII Century, which he employed for the Berwind house. In fact, its principal facades are close copies of those of the Chateau d'Asnieres near Paris. Set at the front (east) of a property of 10.4 acres, the house is a large, two-storey rectangular structure of beige limestone. The three-bay centre portion of the entrance front has a slight projection, and there is also a three-bay, pedimented projection--with rounded corners--at the centre of the rear elevation. The flanking portions of these two facades are each of four bays, making the house eleven bays wide; it is five bays in depth. Hidden behind a solid parapet of carved stone which rims the house and carries statuary groups at its angles there is, in fact, a third or pent-house storey housing servants' quarters.

In keeping with the style which Trumbauer favoured, exterior ornamentation of the house is modest in quantity but placed with great effect. The walls of the first storey are smooth, those of the second storey chastely panelled between window openings. There are plain quoins at all angles and a cornice which forms a belt-line around the house between first and second floors, as well as the expected eaves-cornice. The segmental-headed French windows of the first floor and the flat-headed ones of the second floor have simple architraves and carved, voluted keystones; all have wrought iron guard-rails. The parapet and its statuary have been mentioned. The frontal projection, pierced by three arched portals each with a carved cartouche above, is given four free-standing Corinthian columns of one-storey height to enframe these portals; these columns support an entablature and a balustrade with urns just in front of three second-storey windows above. The projecting bay or "pavilion" on the rear (or garden) facade has statuary groups on half-round pedestals applied against the wall spaces on either side of its central first-floor window and busts on consoles flanking the central window of the floor above.

The three eastern doors of glass and wrought iron open into a foyer at ground or driveway level; a few steps up lead, between paired marble columns with gilt-bronze capitals, into a transverse, north-south hall from which an iron-railed double stair over the foyer ascends to the second floor. Off this imposing hall, to the south and along the entire west range of the house, open the principal reception rooms, as well as two large square alcoves used to display objets de vertu. The plan of the second floor in general repeats that of the first, having a long hall, a large sitting-room centred on the west front, a number of bedchambers etc. Interior decor throughout the house is naturally of French inspiration, and so was the furniture made for The Elms; wall decor has never been changed, and some of the original furniture remains.

(See Continuation Sheet.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 11,944,0023	DATE 9/10/71

(Number all entries)

7. Description.

The house sits within its own walled and landscaped "park." At the front, it is screened from Bellevue Avenue by fine wrought iron grilles and gates between ornamented stone piers. A slight depression of land behind the house allows it to appear there upon a stone-terraced and balustraded platform from which steps lead down to a sizeable lawn running to the limits of the rear property. A screen of tall trees (actually directly above a busy city street) closes the western perspective of the lawn area and, together with other now-large trees carefully placed on the lawn long ago, makes the open space seem larger and more rural than it is. Set a distance apart, in front of the west screen of foliage, are two small, copper-domed, stone tea pavilions between which steps lead to a wisely sunken garden of coloured flowers. At a distance to the north of these, on an edge of the property, are a carriage-house and garage which have been treated as two mansarded lodges with a wrought iron clairvoyée between them--thus incorporating utilitarian buildings into the landscape scheme. Discreetly but strategically placed near the main house and near the tea-pavilion area are a few sculptures on stone pedestals: they make "vista" accents in a small area.



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1899-1901

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Newport still has many summer houses, but The Elms holds place as one of the great ones, through the sophistication, distinction and sensitivity of its architecture and its landscaping. At the time of its building it was regarded as a rectification of the tasteless stridency alleged for most architecture of the immediately preceding decades, although this condemnation legitimately applied less to Newport than to most places. It figures in the architectural parade which Newport offers overall, and it figures with great importance in the marvellous visual continuity of Bellevue Avenue's houses and grounds in particular. It was recently nearly lost, but was rescued by The Preservation Society of Newport County. Since then it has been made available by that organization for public visitation and public and private hospitality and cultural uses.

From 1901 until 1961 the house was in its accustomed use every summer by the Berwind family. Following the death of the last of these, it and its contents were put up for sale: there was a sales agreement with a group intending an apartment development on its site; in 1962 an auction of the contents was held. The sales agreement did not achieve consummation, and after a strenuous fund-raising effort The Preservation Society bought the house and grounds. Additionally, the society was able to buy at the auction some of the furnishings belonging in the house; the large gaps left were filled by loans and gifts. Because of these loans and gifts, The Elms now contains much more in the way of authentic XVIII-Century French furniture and decorative items than it did under Berwind ownership.

Since acquisition by The Preservation Society of Newport County, the house has been meticulously maintained, repaired and renovated where necessary; these cares--and, in fact, improvements--have been repeated on the grounds and plantings. Open to the public for a good part of the year, the house and gardens are heavily visited. On occasion they also provide a scene for lectures, concerts, receptions, dances--notably when there are summer music series and when distinguished foreigners are entertained. To-day this mansion remains used, enjoyed, alive, performing its intended functions brilliantly--moreso now than in the later, somewhat reclusive, years of the Berwinds.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Downing, Antoinette F., and Scully, Vincent J., Jr.: The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, 1640-1915 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1952), pp. 161-162.
 Reed, Henry Hope: The Elms (Newport, Rhode Island, 1968), 24 pp.
 Desmond, Harry W., and Croly, Herbert: Stately Homes in America... (New York, 1903), pp. 201, 205.
Modern Living. Resorts. Housing Problem, in "Time," July 6, 1962 (New York and Chicago, 1962), p. 44.

19/307220/4594/066
 19/306950/4594/120
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS
 19/306950/4594/020
 19/307220/4594/190

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY				OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES				
CORNER	LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		LATITUDE		LONGITUDE		
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	41°	28'	43"	71°	18'	49"	0	'	"
NE	41°	28'	44"	71°	18'	31"	0	'	"
SE	41°	28'	38"	71°	18'	30"	0	'	"
SW	41°	28'	37"	71°	18'	48"	0	'	"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **10.4 acres**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Richard B. Harrington, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: **Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission** DATE: **April 25, 1971**

STREET AND NUMBER:
State House, 90 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN: **Providence** STATE: **Rhode Island, 02903** CODE: **44**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National State Local

Name: *Richard B. Harrington*

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: August 19, 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Ernest A. Connally
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: SEP 10 1971

ATTEST:

William M. Stoughton
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: SEP 3 - 1971