

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	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:
William Watts Sherman House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Baptist Home of Rhode Island

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
2 Shepard Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE: Rhode Island CODE: COUNTY: Newport CODE:

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
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 type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>Home for Aged</u>

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Reverend M. Harvey Randell, Administrator
Baptist Churches of Rhode Island

STREET AND NUMBER:
2 Shepard Avenue

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

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:
Broadway

CITY OR TOWN: Newport STATE: Rhode Island CODE:

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
HABS

DATE OF SURVEY: in process 1970 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: STATE: CODE:

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STATE:
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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The William Watts Sherman House, as built in 1875-76, was a large asymmetrically-massed L-shaped two-and-one-half story stone and frame structure with a tall main gable roof and a massive subsidiary front gable. The complex house was about 60 feet wide and 36 feet deep, with an ell at the southeast corner extending about 12 feet further to the rear. First-story walls are of pink granite random ashlar with rather orange sandstone trim. Casement windows are grouped in this story to form window-walls. The upper stories are of frame construction; upper walls are covered with warm brown shingles cut in various decorative shapes and inset with half-timber and stucco panels painted red and warm beige colors. The very tall, broad, and steeply-pitched gable roof with one small dormer extends about two-thirds the length of the house and is then stepped down for the remaining distance. A large square fluted red-brick chimney stack rises from top of the roof and a second very tall chimney, rebuilt since 1879, is located on the west (front) elevation near the southwest corner. A wide and boldly designed two-story high subsidiary front gable, off-center, begins at the northwest corner of the original house and rises to its peak near the center. The casement windows in the second and third story levels of this gable are arranged in long horizontal bands. The window tier on the second floor is divided by means of four half-timbered panels with red stucco backgrounds. Third-story windows are flanked by triangular stucco panels in warm beige. Barge boards are adorned with carved ornament.

A low porte-cochere, centered on the off-center front gable, shelters the main entrance. The interior of the house is decorated in the 17th century Jacobean Revival style: rooms have deep-beamed ceilings and panelled walls. The short vestibule contains a wide staircase with heavy spiral bannisters and plain chamfered posts, set against the east (rear) wall. To the north (left) of the vestibule, in the northwest corner, was a service stair hall and pantries, and in the northeast (rear) corner, but not accessible directly from the vestibule, the dining room. The kitchen was located in the basement below. A wide doorway in the right (south) wall of the vestibule opens to the living hall, 18 by 32 feet, which extends through the house from front to rear. The hall has a deeply beamed ceiling, dark mahogany woodwork, and a tall, wide, hooded fireplace. The fireplace, faced with light blue and white Dutch tile and located against the center of the right (south) wall, appears to be free standing because of the wide doorway on either side through which space flows into the drawing room and library. The beautiful stained glass in the three front (west) windows of the hall, in half-naturalistic and half-conventional flower patterns, is by John La Farge. The La Farge glass that once occupied the transoms at the rear of the room and in the dining room has been removed and is now in the possession of the University of Victoria, Canada.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

3. 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) **1874-76, 1879-81**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Designed by Henry Hobson Richardson, with interiors by Stanford White, and erected in 1875-76, the William Watts Sherman House is the prototype of the shingled Tudor Manor house in the United States of America and is generally considered to be one of Richardson's masterpieces of domestic architecture. In his successful design of the Sherman House Richardson brought the Queen Anne architectural mode to this country and forcefully to the attention of American architects.

History

In the 1860's and early 1870's the English architect Richard Norman Shaw developed a new architectural mode inspired by the 17th century and known as Queen Anne, that he used for designing large English country houses. In May 1874 perspectives of several of Shaw's manors in his new style appeared in the Building News and made a strong impression on Richardson. Commissioned by William Watts Sherman in September 1874 to design a large house at Newport, Richardson utilized all the elements of Shaw's Queen Anne style to produce his own mature design; he also substituted wood shingle siding for Shaw's hung tile siding. Construction began in 1875 and the house was completed in 1876. In 1879-81, the architect Stanford White, who had worked on the house under Richardson in 1874-76, redecorated three of the principal rooms. Around 1920 the house was much enlarged on the north side by the addition of a long and low service wing. Built on the main axis, the new wing was designed by the Newport architect Dudley Newton in the style of the original house. At various later dates Newton made further changes to the rear but always with a close approximation of the original detail. Richardson's bold massing of the house is still clearly evident today from the front (west) and south side and most of the rooms still retain their 1875-81 interior finish.

The Sherman House was acquired by the Baptist Church of Rhode Island for use as a home for the aged in 1949 and in November 1950 the structure was dedicated and opened as the Baptist Home of Rhode Island.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Architecture, Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (Baltimore, 1963), 223, 265.

Henry-Russell Hitchcock, The Architecture of H. H. Richardson and His Times (2nd ed., Hamden, Conn., 1961), 156-160.

M. G. Van Rensselaer, Henry Hobson Richardson and His Works (Boston and New York, 1888), 103.

Wayne Andrews, Architecture, Ambition and Americans (New York, 1955), 166-67.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds
NW	° ' "	° ' "
NE	° ' "	° ' "
SE	° ' "	° ' "
SW	° ' "	° ' "

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES					
LATITUDE			LONGITUDE		
Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
41°	28'	12"	71°	18'	18"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

6 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian

ORGANIZATION: Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service

DATE: 7/30/70

STREET AND NUMBER:

801 19th Street, N. W.

CITY OR TOWN:

Washington

STATE:

D. C.

CODE:

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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 _____

Title _____

Date _____

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

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
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7. Description Continued page 1

The handsome green and gold library in the southwest (front) corner of the house was originally a drawing room. The room was redecorated as a library by Stanford White in 1879-81, with walls panelled in green and picked out by gold linear designs. The original library located in the southeast corner, and now the white and gold drawing room, was decorated by the firm of Allard under the supervision of White. The dining room, opening off the north (left) side of the living hall, has a fireplace by White, and he probably also redid the rest of the room. Around 1920 the dining room was almost doubled in length when Dudley Newton added the present service wing to the north side of the original house.

The second floor hall is lighted by the long bay of windows across the west front. The small panes of leaded glass in these casement windows are decorated with delicate flower patterns painted in yellow and gold. The main bedroom in the northeast corner is panelled in a Jacobean style with richly figured redwood. The room is also ingeniously lined with closets and drawers behind movable panels.

The Sherman House is in excellent condition and only a few alterations, mostly in the bedrooms, service wing, and rear, have been made to permit its use as a home for the aged. First floor rooms are open to visitors upon request. A new wing has also been added to the northeast (rear) corner of the house.

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9. Major Bibliographical References Continued page 1

Vincent J. Scully, The Shingle Style (New Haven, 1955), 14-18.

Antoinette F. Downing and Vincent J. Scully, The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island (Cambridge, 1952), 141-144, Plates 187-191.

John Burchard and Albert Bush-Brown, The Architecture of America, A Social and Cultural History (Boston and Toronto, 1961), 170, 188.

Alan Gowans, Images of American Living (Philadelphia & New York, 1964), 352, 353, 357, 358.