

**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**



80

Continuation sheet 49

Item number 7

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NAME: Squantum Association

LOCATION: 947 Veterans Memorial Parkway

OWNER: Squantum Association
c/o Christiansen and Company
533 Industrial Bank Building
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

DESCRIPTION:

The Squantum Association occupies a rocky, heavily wooded promontory and a small island on Narragansett Bay adjacent to the grounds of Squantum Woods State Park and Bradley Hospital. Its secluded site is set off from the park and hospital by a rail line, formerly the Providence, Warren and Bristol Railroad. Six buildings stand on the picturesque grounds (see site plan). Most prominent is the Clubhouse (1900-1901; Martin and Hall, architects), a large, two-and-one-half-story, wood and brick, Colonial Revival structure on a high stone foundation. It is surrounded by a two-story Ionic colonnade and topped by a hip roof with a balustraded deck. Other notable features of the Clubhouse include an elaborately detailed entablature with garland-and-swag frieze, dentil course, and modillion cornice; an oriel window containing the main staircase on the western facade; a one-story apsidal extension on the southern side; and Palladian-motif dormers. The Clubhouse is set near the tip of Squantum Point; to the south, on a small island connected to the peninsula by a pedestrian causeway, is a small square, columned gazebo with a tile roof. North of the Clubhouse is the one-story, gable-roofed, wood-frame Billiard Hall (1870s) with a stickwork veranda. This is the oldest surviving building on the grounds, dating back to the years just after the association's founding.

West of the Billiard Hall and northwest of the clubhouse is the Bake House (1889), which houses a kitchen and dining hall. A brick structure with segmental-arched window openings and corbeled cornice, topped with a hip roof, it is perched right at the edge of the bay and has a veranda along the south side suspended over the rocks and water below. A fairly unobtrusive brick addition was made to the north side of the building a few years ago to increase and improve the kitchen facilities. North of the Bake House is a one-story, wood-frame building that was formerly used as a bowling alley; devoid of architectural interest, it is now used as a workshop/storage facility. Northeast of the bowling alley and bakehouse is the Steward's House (early 20th century), a one-and-one-half-story stuccoed structure with bellcast gable roof and hip-roofed dormers.

DATES: ca. 1870, 1889, 1900-1901

(See Continuation Sheet #50).

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SIGNIFICANCE:

The Squantum Association is noteworthy for the insight it provides into social life and customs in Providence in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, for the high architectural quality of the buildings, and for the evocative character of its setting. Founded in 1870 by a group of Providence area residents prominent in the fields of industry, commerce, finance, and politics, the Squantum Association was one of several local eating clubs founded during the Victorian period to provide their members with elaborate shore dinners and clambakes in comfortable quarters at idyllic bayside locations. It was at these clubs that the preparation and consumption of clambakes grew to become ritualistic events that played an important part in the social lives of club members. Squantum, always the most exclusive of these clubs, is today the only survivor, and still serves a membership that includes descendants of the founders.

In addition to its long history as a meeting place for the social elite of Providence, Squantum is significant for the aesthetic value of its physical fabric and setting. As a group, the club buildings are a rare and important example of a resort complex devoted to a peculiar purpose, and some individual structures have intrinsic architectural quality. The extremely picturesque grounds, with their woods and rugged rock outcroppings, are for the most part untouched since the Association's inception and are important for the impression they convey of what the East Providence shoreline was like in the nineteenth century. Hemmed in by industrial development and residential development to the north and south, the area around Squantum is practically the only untouched spot along the city's riverfront and is thus a significant cultural landscape.

ACREAGE: about 2.75 acres

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Assessor's Plat 45, Lots 96 and 97

UTM: 19: 302760: 4628960

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: State