

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL
REGISTER

1. Name of Property

historic name: Smith Hill Historic District

other name/site number: _____

2. Location

street & number: 57-65 Brownell St., 73-114 Holden St., 23-80 Jewett St., 189-240 Smith St., and 10-18 West Park St.

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Providence vicinity: N/A

state: RI county: Providence code: 007 zip code: 02903

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: private

Category of Property: district

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>48</u>	<u>4</u>	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>48</u>	<u>4</u>	Total

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Property name Smith Hill Historic District, Providence County, 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 R. Williamson
Signature of certifying official

30 Sep 1993
Date

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):

entered in the National Register

Alcorn Byer

11/4/93

for Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: DOMESTIC
DOMESTIC
COMMERCE/TRADE

Sub: single dwelling
multiple dwelling
specialty store

Current: DOMESTIC
DOMESTIC
COMMERCE/TRADE

Sub: single dwelling
multiple dwelling
specialty store

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Description

Smith Hill Historic District is a densely built urban residential neighborhood characterized by a variety of housing types and styles. It is located in the Smith Hill neighborhood of Providence, just northwest of the city's central business district and west of the state capital complex; it covers an area of approximately eight acres and contains a total of forty-one nineteenth- and early twentieth-century buildings and eleven outbuildings. The development pattern, with earlier single-family and double houses and later multiple-family and small-scale single-family houses, represents in microcosm a once-larger neighborhood now lost. Smith Hill Historic District remains as an isolated pocket demarcated by new construction to the north, the interstate highway to the east, an industrial complex to the south, and vacant lots and development different in character to the west.

The larger neighborhood and the smaller district take their name from Smith's Hill, a land form which rises abruptly from the Woonasquatucket and Moshassuck Rivers on the south and east, and spreads more gently to rolling hills toward the north and west. The district lies on the steep south-facing hillside, and its major north-south spine, Holden Street, connects two major thoroughfares, Smith Street, the principal street through the neighborhood, at the top of the hill, and Promenade Street at the bottom; east-west streets regularly intersect Holden Street.

The predominantly residential district is characterized by lots generally of irregular sizes, most 3000 to 5000 square feet. Buildings are generally set close to the sidewalk and have very small rear or side yards. Outbuildings are predominantly garages. All but 4 of the buildings are contributing.

The district is dominated by residential buildings constructed between 1850 and 1930, most after 1870. Most of the dwellings are two-and-one-half or three-and-one-half stories with clapboard or wood shingle siding. The forms and programs of many of the residences are similar, but a variety of architectural styles are represented, including Greek Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival. Contributing early twentieth-century garages are constructed of both wood and concrete block. There are two contributing early twentieth-century commercial and institutional buildings, Regine Motor Sales and St. Patrick's School, both masonry buildings on Smith Street. All of the buildings remain occupied, and most are used for their original purpose. They generally remain well preserved, with only a small amount of modern or synthetic siding. Where alterations

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7. Description

Architectural Classification:

MID-19TH CENTURY/GREEK REVIVAL
LATE VICTORIAN/ITALIANATE

Other Description: TRIPLE DECKER

Materials: foundation BRICK roof ASPHALT
walls WOOD/CLAPBOARD other _____

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: locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: A & C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): _____

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE
COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Period(s) of Significance: 1850-1940 _____

Significant Dates: N/A _____

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: _____

Architect/Builder: N/A

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

X See continuation sheet.

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exist, they are primarily new siding, window and door replacement, or porch alteration.

Construction in the district began in the 1850s. For both single- and two-family dwellings, the typical mid-nineteenth-century form is a two-and-one half-story, end-gable-roof structure, three bays wide with side hall plan (Type A; see p. 17; also photos #2 and #7). A second form used for two-family dwellings has a six-bay facade with two center entries leading to mirror-image-plan units (Type B). There are both Greek Revival and Italianate examples of this house type. The two basic house types (A and B) continued to be used for multiple-family dwellings from the late 1850s through the 1870s but Italianate detailing superseded the Greek Revival style. Later examples of these house types incorporated two-story bay windows on the facade. From this variation came a two-family-dwelling format popular in the 1870s and 1880s: a two-and-one-half story gable-front dwelling with a two-bay facade, an entry on one side, and a two-story bay window on the other. The entry was typically sheltered by a bracketed hood and led to both units.

During the 1880s a new, somewhat larger, multiple-family house type emerged. This type (Type C; photo #9) was typically taller and wider than Type A (photos #2 and #7) and often incorporated slightly raised eaves accommodate a third dwelling unit. A cross gable on at least one of the side elevations allowed additional light and ventilation to the added unit. A two-story porch across the facade sheltered two separate entries, one for the first floor and another for the upper stories. Italianate trim was applied to this type and remained dominant in the district into the 1880s. By 1890 detailing of the Type C (photo #9) house more typically was Queen Anne, with the use of decorative wood shingles (particularly in the fishscale pattern), complex roof lines with dormers and cross gables, and stylized eclectic motifs for window trim and porch decoration.

From 1900 until about 1930 the most common house type built in the district, and throughout Providence, was the Triple Decker (Type D; photo #4). These rise three or three-and-one-half stories and contain one residential unit per floor. Triple Decker facades are characterized by a full-width three-story porch or a half-width porch beside a three-story bay window. These are more utilitarian and vernacular in their architectural detailing than earlier multiple-family residences in the district.

There are a number of garages in the district that were built between about 1925 and 1935. Most are small structures constructed of rusticated concrete blocks with hip roofs. These have been designated as contributing

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to the district for their association with the automobile, which had a profound effect on residential development.

The following is an inventory of all properties in the Smith Hill Historic District. Buildings are listed alphabetically by street and followed by a brief description. Historic names of properties are based on survey forms prepared by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission and on historic map research. Unless otherwise noted, all properties are contributing.

BROWNELL STREET

57 Mowry-Nicholson House (1856, 1864, 1877): Originally an Italianate villa with cruciform plan built for G.R. Mowry by the contracting firm Mowry & Steere. Remodeled in the 1867 after the house was purchased by William T. Nicholson, owner of the nearby Nicholson File Company. Nicholson enlarged the house in 1877, adding the three-and-one-half story tower with quoins, oculi, and steep pitched roof. The house is now two-and-one-half stories with Italianate and Queen Anne detailing. Its gabled front is dominated by wide panelled corner pilasters and has a Palladian window over a bracketed window hood at the facade. In the mid-1920s the building was divided into apartments; at that time the shed dormers were added along the sides of the roof.

63-65 Greenblatt/Warner House (ca. 1900): Type C (photo #9), with fish scale shingles decorating the gables and bay windows, molded cornice, gable dormers with pediments, and panelled (1st floor) and turned (second floor) porch posts. By 1902 the house was owned by Berman Greenblatt, a tailor, who rented the house out. Greenblatt also owned the houses at 10 and 12-14 West Park Street. In 1935 the property was purchased by Eva R.G. Werner.

rear Garage (ca. 1940): Single-story cast-concrete-block garage with shallow-patch gable roof built into the hillside.

HOLDEN STREET

73-75 Nicholson/Pettis House (ca. 1890): Type C (photo #9), with cross gables at both side elevations, turned porch posts and fish-scale shingles decorating the gables. The house was built as an income-producing property by William T. Nicholson, owner of the nearby Nicholson File Company. Nicholson lived 57 Brownell Street. In 1899 the property was purchased by Robert Pettis who was in the

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oyster business and owned several income-producing properties in the area.

- 86 Eccles/Knoop House (ca. 1890): This two-and-one-half story Second Empire style house appears to have been built as a multiple-family dwelling. It is two bays wide with a mansard roof, two story bay windows (facade and south elevation), gabled dormers with pediments, and bracketed cornice. A small entry porch and larger wrapping porch are decorated with fluted posts and upper balustrades. In 1895 the house was occupied by William Eccles, a salesman; Theodore W. Knoop, a foreman; and Mary Tattersall, a widow.
- rear Garage (ca. 1925): Single-story garage with brick walls, flat roof and one bay with wood door.
- 88-90 Second Ernest G. Wesley House (ca. 1900): Type C (photo #9), with a two-story bay window at the facade, a box cornice with wide frieze, and turned porch posts. This is one of two identical adjacent houses that appear to have been built by Rev. Ernest G. Wesley (Wesley owned both as early as 1908).
- 92-94 First Ernest G. Wesley House (ca. 1890): Type C (photo #9), a two-story bay window at the south elevation. The house has been altered by the application of modern synthetic siding. Turned porch posts remain visible. This is one of two identical adjacent houses that appear to have been built by Rev. Ernest G. Wesley (Wesley owned both as early as 1908).
- 95 Christopher G. Dodge Carriage House (ca. 1858): This Second Empire style carriage house was built to serve the adjacent house at 11 West Park Street. The carriage house rises two full stories and has a third story contained beneath a mansard roof. It is constructed of brick and has granite trim. The cornice is decorated with dentils and brackets. The entry is set within an arched opening with a deep drip molding springing from consoles. Contemporary doors now fill the large automobile opening. The garage was built for Christopher G. Dodge who owned a dye works. The property was sold from the Dodge family in 1875.
- rear Garage (ca. 1925): A single-story garage constructed of rusticated concrete block with one bay and hip roof. Clapboard and asphalt shingle siding added at front and side, respectively.

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- 96-98 M. Fallen House (ca. 1922): Type D (photo #4), with a three story bay window at the north elevation, deep box cornice with wide frieze, and molded window surrounds. This house is nearly identical to 100-102 Holden Street. By 1926 this income-producing property was owned by M. Fallen who may have been the original owner.
- 100-102 Vincent Ryan House (ca. 1922): Type D (photo #4), with a three story bay window at the north elevation, deep box cornice with wide frieze, and molded window surrounds. This house is nearly identical to 96-98 Holden Street. By 1926 this income-producing property was owned by Vincent Ryan who also ran a rooming house on Plainfield Street.
- 101-103 Hull House (ca. 1916): Type C (photo #9), with a hip roof, two-story bay window at the north elevation, two-story elliptical bay at the south elevation, wrapping porch with Doric columns, hip dormers with original double doors with oval panels. Land on which the house stands was purchased by Everett and Ida M. Hull in 1911. They first appear in city directories at this address in 1917. They lived in one unit and rented the other.
- 104-106 Leo Logan House (1 of 4) (ca. 1915): Type C (photo #9) with an early twentieth-century storefront at the first floor. The house retains the original doors with oval panes, tracery sash, pedimented gable at the facade and Doric columns on porches. This was one of six houses in the district that were built by real estate investor Leo Logan as income-producing properties.
- 108-110 House (ca. 1915): Type D (photo #4) house with modern synthetic siding. Porches and detailing no longer visible. This was one of six houses that were built by real estate investor Leo Logan as income-producing properties.
- 112-114 House (ca. 1915): Originally a Type D (photo #4) house but has been substantially altered by the application of modern synthetic siding. Porches and detailing no longer visible. This was one of six houses in the district that were built by real estate investor Leo Logan as income-producing properties.

JEWETT STREET

- 23-25 Heym House (ca. 1890): Type A (photos #2 and #7), with a clipped corner bay (westernmost at facade) and bracketed entry hood with a

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cornice of paired brackets. At the front are a fine granite wall and stoop. As early as 1895 this house was owned by Mary E. Heym. Also living here at this time was Oscar A. Heym who worked at the nearby Brown & Sharpe mill.

- 24 Charlotte D. Dodge House (1882-1889): A small house with a large two-story gambrel roof, symmetrical side porches, entries with multiple-pane transom lights and full side lights, and an oculus window on the east elevation. The west porch has turned posts. A house appeared on this site between 1882 and 1889, but current early twentieth-century appearance suggests that the house was substantially remodeled ca. 1915-1930 or replaced in toto. Charlotte E. Dodge purchased the property in 1875 and rented it. By 1895 it was occupied by E.V. Mathewson and George A. Willey, both stone cutters. The house was purchased by John H. Coyle in 1901.
- 27-29 Ann Holden House (ca. 1855): Type A (photos #2 and #7), with a bracketed entry hoods (front and side) and a cornice of paired brackets. Out front is a fine granite wall and granite stoop with some cast iron newels remaining. It appears to have been built by Ann Holden as an investment property. This was one of the lots divided from the larger Holden estate (roughly bounded by Smith, Promenade, and Holden Streets and I-95) in 1850.
- 35-37 Leo Logan House (1 of 4) (ca. 1915): Type D (photo #4), with original double doors with oval panes, an arch set into the front gable, and box cornice with a deep soffit and wide frieze. This was one of the six houses in the district that were built by real estate investor Leo Logan as income-producing properties.
- 38 Louis Kranz House (ca. 1885): This is a two-and-one-half story Queen Anne style house with a gable front side-hall entry. The entry is sheltered by a small porch with turned posts and a spindle frieze. Following the design of earlier houses in the district, this house has a two-story bay window at the facade. The house is also decorated with a small vergeboard in the main gable, and a molded box cornice with a wide frieze and brackets. There is a two-story bay window at the east elevation. The earliest occupants of this house that have been identified are Louis Kranz, a die sinker and E.C. Thurston, an inspector.
- rear Garage (ca. 1930-1940): Single-story wood frame garage with clapboard siding and hip roof, recently restored.

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- 39-41 Leo Logan House (1 of 4) (ca. 1915): Type C (photo #9) house somewhat altered. This is one of several in the district that were built by real estate investor Leo Logan as income-producing properties.
- 43 Leo Logan House (1 of 4) (ca. 1915): Type C (photo #9) house somewhat altered. This is one of several in the district that were built by real estate investor Leo Logan as income-producing properties.
- 44 Elizabeth T. Brownell House (ca. 1855): Type B, with Greek Revival and Italianate style detailing, such as panelled corner pilasters, bracketed door hood, and broad entablature at the roof line. Elizabeth Brownell was one of several heirs to the Holden estate (roughly bounded by Smith, Promenade, and Holden Streets and I-95) who built income-producing structures on their land after the estate was divided in 1850. Mrs. Brownell occupied one half of the house from the early 1870s until her death in 1886.
- rear Garage (ca. 1925): Single bay brick garage with flat roof and wood door, one story.
- 49 First John Oldfield House (ca. 1850): A vernacular Greek Revival cottage with five-bay-facade, center entry flanked by side lights, and large central chimney. By 1875 this house and the adjacent dwelling (53 Jewett Street) were owned by John Oldfield. As early as 1895 the building was operated as a boarding house and residents included Dennis F. Buckley, a machinist; John Cullinan, a driver; Charles Kane, a molder; Thomas Noonan, a machinist; and Martin Smith, a grinder.
- 50 Blanchard Tenements (1 of 2) (ca. 1874): Type B, with Italianate style detailing, including two-story bay windows flanking the center entry at both the front and rear elevations, multiple-pane transoms and bracketed door hoods at entries (front and rear), wide cornerboards, and slight window hoods. Gable dormers project from the roof. This building is identical to the adjacent dwelling at 54 Jewett Street. Built by several members of the Blanchard family, these buildings were rented by employees of the nearby Brown & Sharpe factory.
- 53 Second John Oldfield House (ca. 1870): Type B, with panelled corner pilasters, arched entry hood with pendants, slight window

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hoods, and gabled dormers. The house has been recently restored. By 1875 this house and the adjacent dwelling (49 Jewett Street) were owned by John Oldfield. As early as 1895 the building was operated as a boarding house and residents included James Conley, a plumber; Miss Kate Sheridan; Bridget Angell, a widow; John Angell, a clerk; and four others.

rear Garage (ca. 1930): Single-story rusticated concrete block garage with one bay and a hip roof.

54 Blanchard Tenements (1 of 2) (ca. 1874): Type B, with Italianate style detailing, including two-story bay windows flanking the center entry at both the front and rear elevations, multiple-pane transoms and bracketed door hoods at entries (front and rear, wide cornerboards, and slight window hoods. Gable dormers project from the roof. This building is identical to the adjacent dwelling at 50 Jewett Street. Built by several members of the Blanchard family, these buildings were rented by employees of the nearby Brown & Sharpe factory.

55 Samuel Schretter House (ca. 1915): This three-and-one-half story multiple-family dwelling is of a Vernacular design. Sheathed with modern asbestos shingles, the house has a gable-front, side-hall entry, and three-story bay window at the facade. The original tracery windows remain. As early as 1918 the house was owned by Samuel Schretter, a shoe repairer. It appears that Schretter lived on Orms Street and rented out the units in this house.

64 Garage (ca. 1930): Single-story rusticated concrete block garage with one bay and a hip roof.

72 Atcherley/Whitting House (ca. 1890): Type D (photo #4), with Doric columns supporting the porches, box cornices with deep soffit, and decorative multiple-pane sash at the second and third story porches. By 1895 the house was occupied by John Atcherley, a painter, Rowland Atchereley, a machinist; and Richard Whitting, a blacksmith.

78-80 Godfrey House (ca. 1880): Type C (photo #9), with a bracketed cornice, two-story bay window with a bracketed cornice, and two-story rear addition. By 1895 the house was occupied by Mrs. C. Godfrey, a dressmaker; Edward L. Godfrey, a wood molder; and Louis F. Godfrey, a molder.

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SMITH STREET

- 185-189 "The Mohican," Regine Motor Sales (ca. 1932): A commercial block constructed of brick and concrete in the Art Deco style. The original building includes the six easternmost bays which are two stories in height and faced with red brick. Trim is cast concrete. Detailing is simple and stylized. It appears that the original storefronts were replaced by the existing ones in the mid-twentieth century. A single-story addition was made to the west end for the facade (probably ca. 1940). There are two single-story additions at the rear dating from ca. 1950-1970. As early as 1933, Louis Regine, a plumber, here operated three businesses, Providence Plumbing Company, Smith Street Garage, and Regine Motor Sales. The Regines lived in neighboring Mount Pleasant, and their business, which began as a neighborhood-focused operation has now grown into one with a regional clientele.
- 194 Charles S. Cleveland House (1871): Type A (photos #2 and #7), (recently restored) with hip roof and gabled dormers above a wide entablature with a modillion cornice. The house is finished with Italianate style detailing, including a bracketed door hood and modillion cornice on the two-story bay window. This house was built by Charles S. Cleveland on land formerly part of the Holden estate (roughly bounded by Smith, Promenade, and Holden Streets and I-95) which was divided in 1850. The Holden Homestead stood to the east (now the site of I-95). Charles Cleveland and his brother, David, who lived nearby at 111 Park Street, operated the Cleveland Brothers Furniture Company on North Main Street.
- 198 First Robert Pettis House (ca. 1870): Type A (photos #2 and #7), in fine condition with a two-story bay window at the east elevation, original entry door with arched panes and bracketed hood, side (east) porch, dentil cornice, and granite wall with cast iron balustrade. By 1875 this house was owned by Robert Pettis who is listed in city directories as being in the oyster business. Pettis owned several income-producing properties in the district, including the house at 16-18 West Park Street.
- 202 Tucker/Metcalf/Bagnally House (ca. 1850): Type A (photos #2 and #7), with Italianate style detailing, including bracketed door hood, arched windows in the front gable, and bracketed eaves. This is one of two adjacent income-producing houses (202 and 206 Smith Street) that were built by John Tucker, a deputy sheriff, on land which had formerly been part of the Holden estate. The Holden

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estate (roughly bounded by Smith, Promenade, and Holden Streets and I-95) was divided into house lots in 1850. In 1915 the house was acquired by Mary E.E. Metcalf and Fanny D. Bagnally.

rear Garage (ca. 1930): Single-story garage with one bay, constructed of rusticated concrete block, enclosed by hip roof.

206 Tucker/Metcalf/McElroy House (ca. 1850): Type A (photos #2 and #7), with Greek Revival style detailing, including entry portico with fluted Ionic columns and broad entablature at roof line. This is one of two adjacent income-producing houses (202 & 206 Smith Street) that were built by Jonathan Tucker, a deputy sheriff, on land which had formerly been part of the Holden estate. The Holden estate (roughly bounded by Smith, Promenade, and Holden Streets and I-95) was divided into house lots in 1850. In 1878 the property was sold to Georgiana Metcalf. It remained in the Metcalf family into the twentieth century and in 1919 was purchased by William T. and Mary C. McElroy.

212 Commercial Building (ca. 1930): This single-story commercial building was constructed around 1930. Although it has been altered over the years, the building retains its historic massing and may retain original fabric beneath the added elements. Historic maps show that an outbuilding stood on this site as late as 1926. By 1937 this building had been constructed.

rear Garage (ca. 1920-1930): Single-story wood frame garage with
NC numerous alterations including siding, doors and roofing material.

220 Elm Diner (ca. 1925): Although this building was constructed
NC during the period of significance for the district, it has been altered both on the exterior and interior so extensively that it has lost its historical integrity.

244 St. Patrick's School (1928): Designed by architect John F. Hogan, this two-story school has classical revival detailing. The building is constructed of buff-color brick and trimmed with granite. The main entry is centered on the thirteen-bay facade flanked by blind, projecting end pavilions. The entry is topped by a broken scroll pediment with a cornice of dentils and triglyphs. The flat roof is surrounded by a crenelated parapet. The school was built to educate the children of the nearby St. Patrick's Church (83 Smith Street). Construction of I-95 in the 1960's resulted in disintegration of the parish and neighborhood, forcing

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the school to be closed in 1970. The school was then reopened as St. Patrick's Word of God School by the Word of God Community in 1972 and continues to serve this function. Since the demolition of the 1916 St. Patrick's sanctuary in the late 1970s, the school building also houses worship services.

WEST PARK STREET

- 10 Charles F. Hull House (1873): This two-and-one-half story house is the most elaborate the Second Empire style in the district. The facade is two wide with a side-hall entry and two-story bay window. The entry is sheltered by an added porch decorated with modillions and topped by a balustrade. Gable dormers with brackets and ornate detailing project from the mansard roof. The roof line is defined by a bracketed cornice. The house is trimmed with carved cornerboards and slight window hoods. This house was built for Charles F. Hull, partner in the Charles F. & John M. Hull Building Company. The house was owned by the Hull family until 1914 when it was sold to Berman Greenblatt who owned several other properties in the district (63-65 Brownell Street and 12-14 West Park Street). It may have been Greenblatt who converted the building to a multiple-family dwelling.
- 11 Christopher G. Dodge House (1858): This fine Italianate palazzo is one of the earliest, most elaborate houses in the district. The three-story brick dwelling is set on a knoll and is reached by twin granite stairs with wrought-iron balustrades. The three-bay facade has a center entry which is flanked by oriel windows. The entry is sheltered by a bracketed hood and contains the original glazed double doors. There are tall paired windows at the second story and very deep eaves with large brackets and modillions. The carriage house that was constructed with this dwelling stands on a separate lot at 95 Holden Street and has been converted to commercial use. In 1853 Christopher Dodge, who operated a dye works, purchased the land on which this house stands from the Holden estate after it was divided into house lots in 1850. The property remained in the Dodge family until at least 1886. By 1901 it had been converted to a multiple-family dwelling.
- rear Garage (ca. 1925): Three bay brick garage with original doors.
- 12-14 Hull/Greenblatt House (ca. 1900): This well-preserved Queen Anne style house rises two-stories and has a three-bay facade with a side-hall entry and corner tower (northwest corner). Other notable

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features include a projecting cross gable at the west elevation, pedimented gable containing a Palladian window at the facade, wide entablature at the roof line, and two-story front porch with turned posts. In 1869 the land on which this house stands was purchased by John M. Hull. Hull sold to Berman Greenblatt in 1905. It is not clear which of these men built this house, but neither lived here. Greenblatt is listed in city directories as a tailor and he owned several other houses in the district (63-65 Brownell Street and 10 West Park Street).

- 16-18 Second Robert Pettis House (ca. 1897): Type C (photo #9), with Queen Anne detailing including projecting cross gable at west elevation, saw-tooth carving over windows, fish scale shingles in gables and bay window, vergeboards with triglyph motifs, and gable dormers. By 1908 this was one of two income-producing properties owned by Robert Pettis (also owned 198 Smith Street). Pettis is listed in city directories as being in the oyster business.
- no # Garage (ca. 1930): Two-bay garage of rusticated concrete block. Enclosed by hip roof.
- rear Garage (ca. 1930): Three bay wood frame garage with clapboard siding and gable roof covered with corrugated metal roof.

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Property types



Type A



Type B



Type C



Type D

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Photographs

3. Photographer: Christine S. Beard
4. Date: August, 1992
5. Location of negatives: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

Above information pertains to all photographs.

6. View: 244 (248) Smith Street, view to southwest.
7. Photo #1

6. View: Left to right: 194, 198, 202, 206, 212, 220 Smith Street, south side, view to east.
7. Photo #2

6. View: 185-189 (189-193) Smith Street, view to northeast.
7. Photo #3

6. View: Left to right: 86, 88-90, 92-94, 96-98, 100-102 Holden Street, view to southwest.
7. Photo #4

6. View: Left to right: 24 Jewett Street, 101-103 Holden Streets, view to southeast.
7. Photo #5

6. View: 50, 54 Jewett Street, view to southeast.
7. Photo #6

6. View: Left to right: 50, 72, 78-80 Jewett Street, view to southeast.
7. Photo #7

6. View: 11 West Park Street, view to northeast.
7. Photo #8

6. View: 10, 12-14, 16-18 West Park Street, view to southeast.
7. Photo #9

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Significance

The Smith Hill Historic District possesses integrity of design, location setting, material, and workmanship, as well as association with the development of the larger Smith Hill neighborhood, in which it is located, as an ethnically and economically varied urban residential neighborhood. The district is an undisturbed fragment representative of a larger whole which is now gone as a result of modern expansion and deterioration of the residential neighborhood of Smith Hill. Within the district is an intact sampling of properties from all significant periods of development of the Smith Hill neighborhood. Within the period of significance (1850-1940) this neighborhood expanded rapidly from rural common land to a sparsely settled country retreat and ultimately to a densely developed urban neighborhood. Although other areas in the Smith Hill neighborhood have concentrations of property types found in the district (e.g., triple deckers in the Oakland Avenue Historic District and two-family houses in the Pekin Street Historic District), only within the district does one find the full range of residential, commercial, and institutional building forms typically found in early twentieth-century urban residential neighborhoods. As such, the district meets Criteria A and C for listing on the National Register in the areas of Architecture and Community Planning & Development.

The architecture of the Smith Hill Historic District typifies that of inner-city residential neighborhoods. Early houses are large, stylish, single-family dwellings, like the Italianate Christopher Dodge House and the Mowry-Nicholson House. They are prominently sited on the steep hillside, and the Mowry-Nicholson House even partakes of the prescribed mid-century picturesqueness appropriate for riverside villas. Later nineteenth-century multiple-family dwellings are less individualistic but nevertheless participate in the architectural aesthetic mainstream by incorporating stylish detailing onto more standard forms. The most recent dwellings are utilitarian in appearance and sited on their small lots for maximum density. The progression of house type, style, and scale reflect a changing architectural response to an emerging urban environment.

The Smith Hill Historic District's development reflects the shifting demographics of the larger neighborhood and illustrates Smith Hill's vivid history that is now, save for this fragment, lost to recent development. Here, and only here, does one find the sampling of properties that tell of each of the significant periods of Smith Hill's development.

Early settlement on the west side of the Moshassuck River occurred at the east end of Smith Hill. Land farther west (including the portion being

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nominated) was common land for the compact settlement, and early roads fanned out across this common ground. One of the larger country retreats in Smith Hill in the early nineteenth century was that of Thomas Randall Holden. His house was located at the northern end of his property, which ran between Smith Street and the Woonasquatucket River. After Holden's death in 1850 his estate was divided among his heirs and platted into house lots. This subdivision formed the basis for what is now the lot pattern of the Smith Hill Historic District. At least two of the Holden heirs built investment properties within the district at 27-29 and 44 Jewett Street. Most of the remaining lots were sold and some, like 202 and 206 Smith Street, were developed as investment properties while others were improved with stylish residences, such as the Christopher G. Dodge House, 11 West Park Street.

At the time the Holden estate was divided, land comprising the estate and surrounding farms of the was largely undeveloped and industry had not yet been established on the Woonasquatucket River. Although the setting was nearly rural, Smith Hill was close to the busy center of Providence, making it attractive to the prosperous business class. Development in the district and other parts of Smith Hill was advanced by the construction of several roads in the early nineteenth century which made the area more accessible. The Douglas Turnpike, opened in 1807, followed the course of the North Branch Road as far as Eaton Street and continued to Douglas, Massachusetts. The Powder Mill Turnpike, which opened shortly after 1810, connected with the existing Smith Street and ran to Smithfield. This is now known as Smith Street and is the principal thoroughfare through the neighborhood. As house lots were laid out in the mid-nineteenth century, the secondary street pattern emerged. By the time of the Civil War a number of substantial houses had been erected throughout Smith Hill, including in this district, where houses stood on either side of Park Street and on the cross streets between Park and Holden Streets (Jewett, West Park and Brownell Streets). These included the Mowry-Nicholson House, 57 Brownell Street, and the First John Oldfield House, 49 Jewett Street.

Between 1850 and 1940 Smith Hill experienced its greatest period of growth and changed from a rural country retreat to a densely developed urban neighborhood. The two principal factors directing the development of Smith Hill in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were industrialization and immigration. In the nineteenth century, industrialization spread along the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers, which define the southern and eastern edges of Smith Hill. At the same time, the railroad was becoming an increasingly important factor in the growth of industry. In the 1840s tracks were laid along the edges of the two rivers, forming a direct link from Boston to New York through

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Providence. Important industrial giants at the foot of Smith Hill were Nicholson File, established on Acorn Street in 1863, and Brown & Sharpe, which relocated at the foot of Holden Street in 1870. Industrial prosperity encouraged residential development in nearby Smith Hill to accommodate the many employees of the mills.

A large majority of the work force was immigrant labor. The character of the district was most strongly affected by the Irish and Jewish immigrants. Driven from their homeland by the Great Potato Famine of the 1840s, the Irish were the first immigrant workers to populate Smith Hill. Later in the century Eastern Europeans and Balkans enriched the ethnic community of Smith Hill. The various ethnic communities helped to shape the character of Smith Hill, particularly through the establishment of institutions. The Irish have always had a strong influence in Smith Hill. In 1842 St. Patrick's Church was constructed at the eastern edge of the neighborhood. Its close proximity reinforced the Irish presence in Smith Hill where housing was relatively inexpensive and close to the mills. The large parcels of land that had dominated the landscape in the early nineteenth century were gradually divided into small house lots. By the 1870s and 1880s multiple-family dwellings were being constructed throughout the Smith Hill area to house the growing work force of the mills, particularly the nearby Brown & Sharpe factory. Excellent examples of this type of the housing are the two Blanchard Tenement Houses, 50 & 54 Jewett Street, the Second John Oldfield House, 53 Jewett Street, Charles S. Cleveland House, 194 Smith Street, and Robert Pettis House, 198 Smith Street. By the early twentieth century Smith Hill was a well-established Irish neighborhood. Irish immigrants and their descendants dominated the neighborhood institutions. Approximately half the policeman, fireman and teachers were Irish in 1910. Irish influence remained strong in the district well into the twentieth century. Between 1902 and 1916 St. Patrick's Church replaced its small 1840s sanctuary with a magnificent Gothic Revival structure at the corner of Smith and Davis Streets. In 1928 the parish added a school at 244 Smith Street.

Between 1890 and 1920 a number of Jewish immigrants came to Providence, primarily to escape persecution in Russia and eastern Europe. Prior to that, beginning in the 1840s, a small number of Jews had immigrated here from Germany. This earlier group settled along the eastern border of Smith Hill but by 1877 had virtually disappeared from the area. The Jewish population was quickly revitalized by Russian Jews. In the mid-1880s there were 20 Jewish families in Smith Hill. The number of Jewish families had grown to 208 by 1910. The majority of these immigrants moved into an older, poorer section of Smith Hill at the eastern end of Chalkstone Avenue near the railroad tracks and Moshassuck River industry.

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Property records indicate that a number of houses in the district had Jewish owners in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One of the principal property owners in the district was Berman Greenblatt who owned the houses at 12-14 West Park Street, 63-65 Brownell Street, and 10 West Park Street.

Continued expansion of residential development throughout the district in the late nineteenth was facilitated by the advent of public transportation. By the early 1880s Smith Hill was served by horse car routes along Chalkstone Avenue and Smith Street. By 1900 trolleys replaced the horse cars and additional routes were established.

Like many radiating arterial roads, Smith Street acquired a commercial overlay in the early twentieth century. Three of these early twentieth-century commercial buildings remain in the district: Regine Motor Sales, 185-189 Smith Street, the commercial building at 212 Smith Street, and the Elm Diner at 220 Smith Street (which has been altered substantially and is therefore considered noncontributing to the district). All originally were neighborhood oriented, but the neighborhood garage, like many in urban areas, evolved into a national brand-name automobile franchise with a regional clientele.

In the first two decades of the twentieth century remaining empty lots (primarily along Holden Street and Jewett Street) were occupied by multiple-family dwellings, creating the continuous streetscapes that characterize the district today. The last two houses to be built in the district, M. Fallen House, 96-98 Holden Street, and Vincent Ryan House, 100-102 Holden Street, were constructed around 1922. By the 1920s nearly all the land in the district, like the rest of Smith Hill, was occupied. Small-scale construction in the 1920s and 1930s reflected the growing use of the automobile, and small garages were squeezed onto existing house lots. There are eight such garages in the district.

Through the 1920s and 1930s the older well-established industrial companies continued to expand and employ residents of Smith Hill. Several new businesses were attracted to the remaining vacant sites along the industrial corridor, providing additional jobs for nearby residents. Despite the city's relative population stability, in the 1920s the population of Smith Hill began a steady decline that anticipated the city's by several decades.

The Depression hit Smith Hill hard: many residents lost their jobs and moved away. There was little to attract new residents, and by 1940 twenty per cent of the houses in Smith Hill were vacant (as compared to

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three per cent for the city as a whole). Despite a strong wartime economy, decline in Smith Hill continued after World War II: the general prosperity of the 1940s made it possible for many families to move from the older housing of the city's urban neighborhoods to new houses in less populated sections of Providence or in suburban areas like Cranston, Johnston, Warwick, or North Providence where employment had become available as companies began moving to modern facilities outside of Providence center.

Employer and employee abandonment of the city accelerated in the 1950s and 1960s. Nicholson File and Brown & Sharpe, employers of many neighborhood residents, moved to suburban locations in 1959 and 1964 respectively. Beginning in the early 1960s, Interstate Highway 95 separated the east half of Smith Hill from the rest of the neighborhood. As state government grew beginning in the 1960s, the residential eastern rump end of Smith Hill was gradually converted to government use.

Revitalization efforts in Smith Hill began in the 1970s continue today. Between 1986 and 1992, six of the proposed district's contributing buildings have been successfully rehabilitated. Listing of this district in the National Register should encourage further rehabilitation and attract new residents to both the district and the neighborhood as a whole.

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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: approximately 12 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing	
A	<u>19</u>	<u>299300</u>	<u>4633870</u>	B	<u>19</u>	<u>299180</u>	<u>4633560</u>
C	<u>19</u>	<u>299060</u>	<u>4633550</u>	D	<u>19</u>	<u>298880</u>	<u>4633860</u>

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Christine S. Beard, Consultant

Organization: Christine S. Beard Assoc., Hist. Pres. Consultants Date: March, 93

Street & Number: 23 Cottage Street Telephone: 508-651-3339

City or Town: Natick State: MA ZIP: 01760

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Woodward, Wm McKenzie. Smith Hill, Providence. Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission. 1980.

Providence City Directories (various years).

Providence Street Directories (various years).

Maps

Everts and Richards. Topographical Atlas of Providence County, Rhode Island. 1895.

Hopkins, G.M. City Atlas of Providence. 1875, 1882, 1918, 1926, 1937.

Richards, L.J. and Co. Street Map of Providence. 1908, 1917.

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Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

Beginning at the northwest corner of the district, the boundary begins at the southeast corner of Smith and Calverley Streets. Moving southwesterly, the boundary follows the west lot line of 244 Smith Street (St. Patrick's School) to Jewett Street. It continues along the south lot line of 244 Smith Street to Calais Street. It then runs along the west and south lot lines of 78-80 Jewett Street, continuing along the south lot line of 74 Jewett Street to the property line of the vacant lot at 70 Jewett Street. The boundary then follows the west and south lot lines of 70 Jewett Street and continues along the south lot lines of 64 and 54 Jewett Street to the west lot line of 44 Jewett Street. It then runs southward along the west lot line of 44 Jewett Street to West Park Street and turns east and runs along the south lot line of 44 Jewett Street and 86 Holden Street until it reaches Holden Street. Turning southward, the boundary moves along the west lot lines of 16-18 West Park Street, 73-75 Holden Street, and 63-65 Brownell Street. It turns to the east at Brownell Street and runs along the south lot line of 57 Brownell Street. The boundary then turns northward and extends along the east lot line of 57 Brownell Street, south and east lot lines 10 West Park Street, crosses West Park Street and runs along the east lot line of 11 West Park Street, south and east lot lines of 24 Jewett Street, crosses Jewett Street and runs along the east and north lot lines of 23-25 Jewett Street, and east lot line of 194 Smith Street. The boundary crosses Smith Street until it meets the south lot line of 189 Smith Street. Turning to the east, the boundary follows the south lot line of 189 Smith Street, then continues around the lot along the east, northeast and northwest lot lines of 189 Smith Street to Holden Street. The boundary again moves southward, along the southwest and west lot lines of 189 Smith Street. Turning to the west, the boundary follows the north lot lines of 198, 202, 206, 212, 220, 224, and 244 Smith Street to the point of beginning. The district boundaries are delineated on the attached sketch map.

Boundary Justification

The district boundaries include that part of the Smith Hill neighborhood that remains as an undisturbed fragment representative of a larger whole which is now as the result of modern expansion and deterioration of the residential neighborhood of Smith Hill. The boundary is drawn to include those properties that are clustered here amid major later alterations to the urban residential fabric. The eastern boundary is marked by Interstate 95 which separates the district from the State Capital area. Only one early 20th-century commercial building has been included on the north side of Smith Street as the other lots now contain modern structures or are

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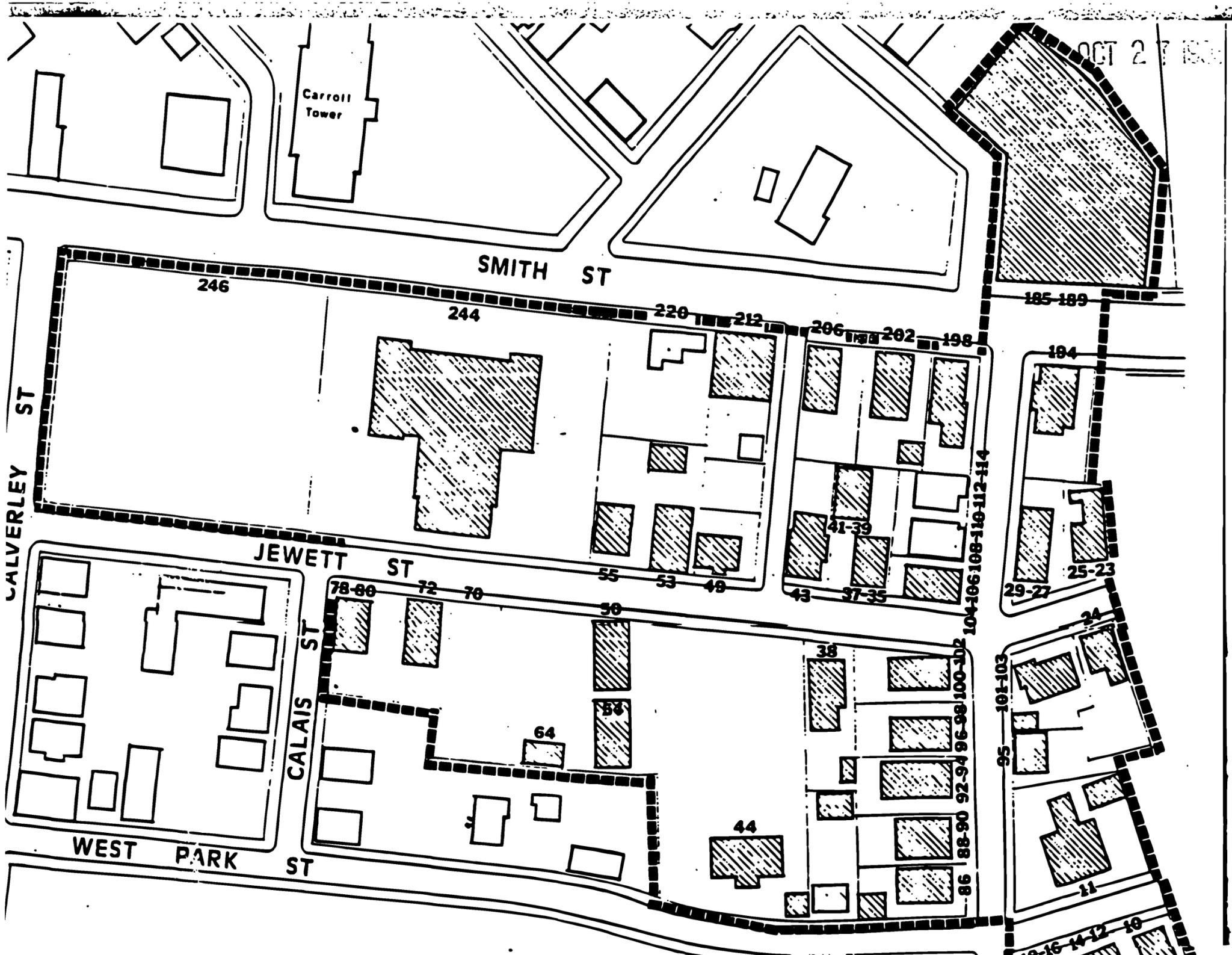
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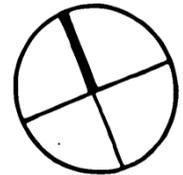
vacant. West of the district are residential rows which were built around the same time as later buildings in the district but have experienced much greater levels of alteration and demolition. South of the district is the large industrial complex, formerly Brown & Sharpe Manufacturing Company.

OCT 27 1992



SMITH HILL HISTORIC DISTRICT
 Providence Rhode Island

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission
 OCTOBER 1992



Legend	
District Boundary	
Contributing Structure	
Non-contributing Structure	