

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section _____ Page _____

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SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 09000708

Date Listed: 9/1/2009

Stonybrook Estate Historic District
Property Name

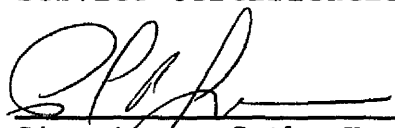
Newport
County

RI
State

N/A

Multiple Name

This property is determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.



Signature of the Keeper

9/1/09

Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

Certification:

The documentation was presented as a *nomination* rather than a determination of eligibility. There were no owner objections received as part of the current nomination process. [The SHPO certification inadvertently checked the wrong box.]

Significance:

The correct *Level of Significance* is: *local*.

[The context used to consider the architectural significance of this district was based on local patterns of development and history. No statewide comparative analysis was provided, outside the narrow confines of Newport and Middletown.]

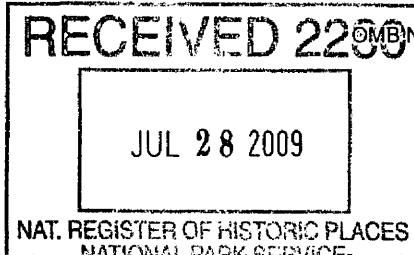
The Period of Significance is revised to read: 1928—1930.

[The Period of Significance should be directly tied the specific area(s) of significance documented in the nomination narrative. As the current nomination only cites *Architecture*, the period of significance must conform to the extant historic resources able to convey that context and theme. If the nomination had been presented under Criterion A, the appropriate period might have been extended to reflect the first era of redevelopment in the area from agricultural to residential/resort use.]

These clarifications were confirmed with the Rhode Island SHPO office.

DISTRIBUTION:

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)



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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Stonybrook Estate Historic District

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 501 - 521 Indian Avenue and 75 Vauclose Avenue not for publication

city or town Middletown vicinity

state RI code RI county Newport code 005 zip code 02842

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this 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 meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Edward Henderson 7/24/2009
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the 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
 - See continuation sheet.
- removed from the National Register.
 - See continuation sheet.
- other (explain)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

[Signature]

9/1/2009

Stonybrook Estate Historic District

Name of Property

Newport County, RI

County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property

(Check only one box.)

- buildings
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include any previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	5	buildings
2		sites
		structures
		objects
6	5	total

Name of related multiple property listings

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

Landscape/Garden

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Domestic/Single Dwelling

Landscape/Garden

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Late Gothic Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation Stone

walls Stone

wood - shingle

roof Slate, asphalt, copper

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Stonybrook Estate Historic District

Name of Property

Newport County, RI

County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
B removed from its original location.
C a birthplace or grave.
D a cemetery.
E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
F a commemorative property.
G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1883-1930

Significant Dates

1928

Significant Person

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Horace Trumbauer

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository

Stonybrook Estate Historic District
Name of Property

Newport County, RI
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10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property 8.6 acres

UTM References

(Place additional references on a continuation sheet.)

1	1	9	3	1	3	0	0	0	4	5	9	7	2	1	0
Zone	Easting			Northing											
2															

3															
Zone	Easting			Northing											
4															

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Wm Mackenzie Woodward/ Architectural Historian

organization Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission date 06/30/2009

street & number 150 Benefit Street telephone 401-222-2678

city or town Providence state RI zip code 02903

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name _____

street & number _____ telephone _____

city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and amend listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

<u>Stonybrook Estate Historic District</u>	<u>Middletown</u>	<u>Newport Co., R. I.</u>
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7. DESCRIPTION

The Stonybrook Estate Historic District is an 8.6-acre lushly vegetated tract on both sides of a tree-lined section of Indian Avenue south of Green End Avenue and north of Taggart's Ferry Road and Vaucleuse Avenue, overlooking the west shore of the Sakonnet River at Middletown's eastern edge. The land rises gently from sea level at the river's shore to just over 50 feet at the district's northwestern corner. Just south of Vaucleuse Avenue, which forms part of the district's western edge, a small creek crosses Indian Avenue and meanders into the Sakonnet River east of the intersection of Vaucleuse and Indian Avenues. The district's principal properties comprise a large, early twentieth-century multiple-resource estate with landscaped grounds, subdivided in the late twentieth century. It includes nine buildings, four of which are contributing and five non-contributing, and two discrete contributing sites.

Indian Avenue

501 C Stonybrook, the Edward Collings Knight, Jr Estate (1927-28; Horace Trumbauer [Philadelphia], architect): A large, asymmetrically massed, rambling-T-plan, one-and-a-half-story random-course-ashlar stone house in an Anglo-French Late-Mediæval mode with windows arranged in banks of two, three, four, or five double-hung sash or casements; and prominent cross-gable and hip roof with end-gable dormers on the gable-roof sections, hip-roof dormers on the hip-roof section, dormers extending in the wall plane above the cornice on the east elevations, and large, prominent chimneys with clustered chimney pots, one toward the north end of the north-south main block, one toward the south end of the main block, one at the intersection of the main block and the base of the T, and two on the north elevation of the base of the T. The principal entrance, off center on the façade (west elevation), is within an off-center projecting end-gable-roof pavilion with partially shingled gable end. On the east elevation are two large terraces: one within the re-entrant angle between the main block and the east-extending base of the T and one across the east elevation of the base of the T. A loggia with round-arch openings extends across the south end of the main block adjacent to the terrace. A glazed porch with round-arch windows and French doors, similarly configured to the loggia on the south, extends across the east elevation.

The interior contains large public spaces and broad halls on the first level and a number of moderate-size bedrooms connected by narrow hallways on the upper level.

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Indian Avenue continued

Designed and constructed as a summer residence, the spatial organization and finishes were calculated as responses to that specific use: accommodating a large number of people who congregated on the lower level in well-detailed large spaces connected with the outdoors and who retired on the upper level to more modest bedrooms, many with original adjoining baths, for individuals or, at the most, couples.

The interior unfolds in a dramatic spatial sequence. Entrance into this monumental house is through a modest entrance below flared-hip-roof hood into a small low-ceiling vestibule, accommodating at most two persons. The vestibule opens into a telescope-plan main hall, wider in its western, entrance section, than that to the east. The triple-run principal stairs rise to the west at the west end of the hall, with the second landing above the vestibule. Immediately to the right of the entrance from the vestibule is a small coat closet and powder room. A large room, once a reception room now converted to a family kitchen, lies to the south of the main hall, filling the first level of the south wing. To the north of the main hall, just east of the base of the staircase, is a service hall extending to the service wing in the north wing. Beyond the service hall, the dining room is on the north side of the main hall, with entrances in both the wider west section and the narrower east section. Beyond the main hall is a large paneled library; it communicates with the dining room immediately to its west and with the glazed loggia to its east.

Interior surfaces and details on the first story are largely intact. Floors are stained hardwood, and ceilings are plaster. The principal hall (on both first and second level), original reception room, dining room, and service hall (extending north from the principal hall at the base of the principal staircase) have random-width vertical-board pine paneling with fluted edges and low chair rail. The lower section of the principal hall, original reception room, and dining room are now painted white, but may well have shared the grey pickled finish, still in the upper section of the principal hall and the service hall, that emphasizes the picturesque quality of heavily knotted pine. The walls in the principal hall have an overlay of rectangular panels, both below and above the rail, formed by slender bolection molding; these panels may also be a later addition. The stained-pine beveled-panel library walls have garland-guilloche baseboard, wainscot, and cornice moldings and door frames, and garlands depend from the wall sconces and frame the overmantel centered on the north wall. These finishes are

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Indian Avenue continued

among the most rustic found in Trumbauer's residential work.

The upper story, dedicated to private bedrooms, has a large and spatially directed hall that extends south in the south wing from the top of the main staircase, but the halls that connect with the bedrooms in the east and north wings are episodic, turning to accommodate the more than eight bedrooms located under the eaves of the steep roof. Finishes in these plaster-wall-and-ceiling rooms are simple: molded baseboards; simple door and window casings; and one-story mantels. The most dramatic space is the original sleeping porch on the south side of the base of the T near the center of the house: it has a flagstone-slate floor, horizontal-board walls, and exposed timber sills, plates, posts, and, in the gable end, kingpost and struts. Several of the mantels and doors, especially in the rooms in the east wing, appear to date to the mid-19th century and may well have been relocated from another house.¹

Edward Collings Knight, Jr (1864-1936), was the son of one of the pioneers of the Cuban molasses trade. In addition to sugar, Knight, Sr (1813-1892), made the family fortune in railroads and shipping, pursuits in which the son also successfully engaged. This was the third residence and the second Rhode Island house that Knight commissioned of Trumbauer. He and his first wife, Clara Waterman Dwight Knight (ca 1867-1910), first engaged the architect to design their town house (1902-03) at 1629 Locust Street in Philadelphia, an almost minuscule eighteenth-century-inspired *hôtel particulier*. They then engaged Trumbauer to design their summer house, Claradon Court² (1903-04), 620 Bellevue Avenue, Newport (NHL, Bellevue Avenue Historic District, listed 11 May 1976), Trumbauer's design homage to English architect Colen Campbell, whose Hedworth House (1716-17) in Durham, England, directly inspired its design. Knight's second wife, Marie Louise LeBel Knight (?-1936) was a spirited French Canadian sportswoman. In the early 1920s they built Corolla Island (now The Whalehead Club, NR) on the Outer Banks in Corolla, North Carolina, where they repaired each winter for hunting water fowl. The allusion to late mediæval English and French country lodges, a source at the height of its popularity in the 1920s, seems even more eminently appropriate for both the heritage and interests of the second

¹ Whether these elements were installed at the time of the house's construction or by a subsequent owner remains unknown.

²Now known as Clarendon Court.

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Indian Avenue continued

Mrs. Knight. The property was subdivided after the Knights' deaths, most recently in the 1980s, after which new houses were built to the north on the east side of Indian Avenue (see 502 and 515 Indian Avenue).

- 501
C Stonybrook Grounds: With a landscape that includes significant features of both hardscape and planting, the house is sited toward the northeast corner of an almost five acre parcel³ that gently rises east to west from approximately ten to twenty feet. Access to the house is across a long drive that curves in a forty-five-degree arc southeast from Indian Avenue; it supplements the original entrance, located immediately to the north, adjacent to the gatehouse (now a separate property, 515 Indian Avenue, also included in this nomination, described below). Emulating the sequential experience of arrival that was both longer and more dramatically realized as first built, the present entrance drive arrives at two circular turnabouts to the west and north of the house, the former in front of the principal entrance, the latter between the service entrance and the three-stall garage near the property's edge. A random-course ashlar retaining wall, similar in appearance to the stonework on the house, extends along the property's Sakonnet River edge and continues into the mouth of a meandering brook that describes a 180-degree arc along the property's southern edge; lined with ledges and filled with stones, this is no doubt the property's eponymous feature. A circular-plan pergola stands near the brook toward the west end of the brook's arc. A bridge with round-arch balustrade crosses the brook near its confluence with the river. Trees include a variety of specimen beeches and other deciduous trees, along the Indian Avenue property edge, framing the drive's entrance to the property, on the northern edge, and clustered near the pergola and the brook. A row of conifers shields the property from the intersection of Indian and Vaucluse Avenues, and a variety of evergreen shrubs cluster at the façade's northern and southern ends. A small hexagonal-plan formal garden, its edges defined by evergreen shrubs, is north of the north elevation of the base of the T.

³ Reduced in size from its original eight-and-a-half acres following the division in the mid-1980s of the northern 3.5 acres into two separate lots; 515 and 521 Indian Avenue. Additional acreage on the west side of Indian Avenue was also historically associated with this property encompassing the present 502 Indian Avenue and 75 Vaucluse Avenue, see below.

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Indian Avenue continued

501 NC Garage (ca 1985): A simple, wood-frame, one-story, flank-gable-roof building with three vehicular entrances on the south elevation.

502 C Stonybrook Garage (1927-28; Horace Trumbauer [Philadelphia], architect): A one-and-a-half-story, symmetrical five-bay-façade, random-course ashlar building with a lower one-and-a-half-story ell set back from the façade's wall plane and extending northwest from the northwest corner, five paired French doors arranged symmetrically on the façade, a small off-center brick chimney below the crest of the south slope of the roof, and a large stone chimney with two pots centered on the ridgeline within the west elevation; the asymmetrical north elevation has irregular fenestration, an off-center entrance, and two large, asymmetrical end-gable dormers extending the wall plane above through the cornice with two small end-gable dormers placed symmetrically between them. Built as a five-stall garage, the building was originally oriented toward the south, with a large parking pad in front of it. As converted for residential use, its orientation was switched to the north elevation, and the garage doors replaced with French doors. Like many utilitarian service buildings on large estates, this continues materials and detailing found on the main house (see 501 Indian Avenue).

The two-acre parcel once included an elaborate fan-plan formal garden south of the garage; that area is now open lawn, but archaeological investigation may reveal subterranean remnants.

502 NC Cottage (ca 1990): A shingled one-and-a-half-story building with two-stall garage on the façade flanked to the east by hip-roof entrance porch, asymmetrically placed cross gable above façade, and two asymmetrically placed dormers on the north elevation.

502 NC Cottage (ca 1990): A shingled one-and-a-half-story building with three vehicular entrances on the façade, three symmetrically placed dormers on east and west slopes of the roof, and square-plan cupola centered on the ridgeline.

515 C Stonybrook Gatehouse (1927-28; Horace Trumbauer [Philadelphia], architect). A one-and-a-half-story, asymmetrically massed, L-plan, random-course ashlar building with complex cross-gable slate roof, principal entrance at the base of the ell that extends north from the main block, asymmetrical fenestration, large bow window on the south

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Indian Avenue continued

elevation, and prominent stone chimneys with pots centered on the ridgeline on the east and north elevations. Located immediately adjacent to Indian Avenue, this cadet version of the main house (see 501 Indian Avenue) continues its stylistic themes through massing, materials, and detailing. This building was separated from the main house when the property was subdivided in the 1980s.

The gatehouse's interior is large intact and includes a small one-story Tudoresque mantel in the parlor, a Tudor-arch opening between the parlor and dining room, simple staircase, and lancet-arch doors in the upper story.

The 1.7-acre parcel includes some plant material that was part of Stonybrook's original landscape, notably around the gatehouse, as well as some trees along the drive, which served originally as the principal entrance drive to Stonybrook.

- 515
NC House (1988): A large, stone-clad, rectangular-plan, high-hip-roof house with highly inflected massing, including twin end gables centered on the façade, hip- and end-gable-roof projecting pavilions on the east elevation, large terrace extending from the east elevation to the east and to the south, where it surrounds a swimming pool and reaches a pool house near the property's southern boundary.
- 521
C Stonybrook Grounds (1927-28): This 2.11-acre parcel was subdivided from the Stonybrook estate in the late 20th century but still retains identifiable, intact landscape elements associated with that era. Landscape features include both hardscape and plantings. Built landscape features include an historic curved, ramped driftway from the middle of the lawn to the shore of the Sakonnet River, an historic retaining wall along the lawn's edge at the river, remnants of an historic subterranean boat house built into the retaining wall just south of the ramp, a curving main drive that enters a teardrop-plan landscaped court in front of the house, a large parking apron on the southeast side of the garage wing, and terracing on the east side of the house. Plantings include specimen trees, some dating to the Stonybrook era, and contemporary hedges, shrubs, and trees. The modern house on the property occupies the site of the Stonybrook tennis court. A small historic building, that sheltered viewers at the tennis court, has been moved next to the ramp down to the boathouse.

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Indian Avenue continued

521 NC House (ca 1989): A one-and-a-half-story, staggered-T-plan, brick-and-shingle house in the Neo-Shingle Style with asymmetrical massing, telescope-plan north wing, asymmetrically placed windows, prominent twin-flue chimneys on the façade and on the ridgeline of the east ell, and a drive-through one-and-a-half-story service wing and garage set at a 45-degree angle and extending southwest from the southwest corner of the main block.

Vaucluse Avenue

75 C Stonybrook Gardener's Cottage (1927-28; Horace Trumbauer [Philadelphia], architect): A random-course-stone, one-and-a-half-story, T-plan, slate-cross-gable-and-pent-roof house with principal entrance within an ample blind-façade porch on the west elevation, banked casement windows asymmetrically arranged on the north and west elevations and centered on the south elevation, ridgeline chimney in the wall plane of the southern elevation, shed-roof dormers on the roof's east and west elevations, and square-plan cupola with weathervane centered on the ridgeline. Set well back from Vaucluse Avenue on a 1.42-acre parcel, the house is approached by a slightly curving drive, a remnant of the drive that once extended from Indian Avenue to the east and past the garage (see 502 Indian Avenue). Trees adjacent to the house are part of the original landscaping.

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Stonybrook Estate Historic District
Middletown, Rhode Island

Photographs 1, 2, 3, 9, 10 & 11
Date: September 9, 2008
Photographer: Susanna Prull

Photographs 4, 5, 6, 7 & 8
Date: May 12, 2009
Photographer: Richard E. Greenwood

1. Stonybrook, view east across the front lawn
2. Stonybrook, view northwest with stone bridge and sea wall in foreground
3. Stonybrook, landscape view south over the brook
4. Stonybrook, landscape view north from main house to boathouse foundation
5. Stonybrook, view east in front hall
6. Stonybrook, view west in front hall
7. Stonybrook, view west in dining room
8. Stonybrook, view south in larger bedroom front wing
9. Stonybrook Estate Garage, view southwest
10. Stonybrook Estate Gardener's Cottage, view northwest
11. Stonybrook Estate Gatehouse, view southwest

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

The Stonybrook Estate Historic District is a notable example of the high-style residential development associated with the growth of an extensive summer-resort society that was centered in Newport, Rhode Island and spread into the neighboring towns of Middletown, Portsmouth, and Jamestown in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries. The district, which achieves significance under Criterion C at the state level in the area of architectural history, is the community's largest, most fully developed, and most intact representative of this phenomenon. It includes the main house, all attendant outbuildings, and associated grounds. It represents a nationally prominent individual and the mature work of a nationally prominent architect, Horace Trumbauer.

Development History

The southeastern corner of Aquidneck Island, where the Stonybrook Estate Historic District is located, developed shortly after the establishment of Newport in 1639 as part of the town's agricultural hinterland. The pattern of agricultural land use set in the seventeenth century was fully established during the eighteenth century and persisted into the twentieth century, sustained by the area's fertile soils and gently rolling terrain. In 1743, this area became part of the new town of Middletown, which was set off from Newport, in part, because of the sharp difference in character between the urban port with its commercial interests and the surrounding farming community. In the middle decades of the nineteenth century, as Newport acquired national renown as a summer resort, vacationers in the city began to explore this adjacent countryside, drawn by the scenic attractions of a bucolic landscape of isolated farmsteads surrounded by fields, pastureland, and coastal marshes; punctuated by dramatic ridges like nearby Hanging Rock; and bordered by an alternately rocky and sandy coastline.

The immediate vicinity of the historic district at this time was divided by stone walls, fences, and the rocky shoreline into an irregular grid of field and pasture, the outlying lands of farms centered on Third Beach Road or Howland Avenue to the west. The closest farmsteads were those of the Taggart and Howland families, on either side of Howland Avenue, just west of the district. An extension off the east end of Howland (today's Taggarts Ferry Road) ran down to a ferry landing on the Taggart Farm. This ferry, which operated into the 1870s, served farmers across the Sakonnet River in Little Compton with transporting their produce in Newport.

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Eugene Sturtevant (1838-1899), a Newport resident, initiated a new phase of development here in 1871, when he moved to a farmhouse off Third Beach Road, formerly owned by a Peckham family. Inspired by the attractive qualities of the coastal land stretching north from his property, he conceived a plan to develop it as a satellite suburb for the burgeoning Newport summer colony. He moved quickly to realize the plan, taking on a limited partner, Alfred A. Smith, who had already achieved considerable success developing real estate for the Newport resort community, most notably along Bellevue Avenue and Ocean Drive. By February 1872, Sturtevant and Smith had acquired the two-and-a-half-mile stretch of shoreline from Sturtevant's property at Third Beach north to Black Point in Portsmouth, and platted it for the sale of individual lots. Their plat featured a central longitudinal road, Indian Avenue, flanked by one hundred rectilinear lots. The lots were generous in size for the most part, with an average frontage of 200 feet and depths of 400 feet or more; though some were of lesser depth.

The development of Indian Avenue began slowly, hampered by the Panic of 1873 and the area's relative remoteness from Newport. Sturtevant worked to establish Hanging Rocks Road, which would complete a direct public thoroughfare from downtown Newport to the south end of Indian Avenue.⁴ When he finally succeeded in having the road opened in 1883, a brief burst of summer estate building occurred, primarily on the waterfront lots along the southern half of Indian Avenue. Unfortunately for Sturtevant and Smith, the three-and-a-half-mile distance to Newport still proved to be too great for most and only a handful of properties were developed.

With the advent of the automobile, the Indian Avenue neighborhood attracted more development. In the first three decades of the twentieth century, new summer estates filled in many of the spaces between the earlier ones on the southern half of Indian Avenue, though much of the original plat remained in agricultural use, especially north of Green End Avenue. The most important product of this period of growth was the Edward C. Knight, Jr. estate, Stonybrook (1927-28), designed by Horace Trumbauer, the prominent Philadelphia-based architect with numerous Newport mansions to his credit. In addition to the main house on a waterfront lot, the Knight estate extended across Indian Avenue, with formal gardens and outbuildings in the same style as Stonybrook. With its grounds enveloping Indian Avenue and its Gothic style

⁴ James Yarnall, *Newport Through Its Architecture: A History of Styles from Postmedieval to Postmodern* (Newport, 2005), pp. 87-88.

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complimenting the picturesque rural character, Stonybrook was a significant addition to the district.

The pattern of summer estates with ample landscaped grounds interspersed with occasional farm fields defined the Indian Avenue neighborhood into the decade after World War II. In the last quarter of the twentieth century another round of development added a new generation of large houses, filling in formerly undeveloped land or subdivided portions of the earlier estates. Amid these modern additions, the section of Indian Avenue at its intersection with Vacluse Avenue retains the historic look and feel of the earlier resort era, due to the proximity of the historic buildings and the retention of the heavily landscaped acreage that has historically characterized the district and now serves to screen the newer houses.

Architecture

Horace Trumbauer (1869-1938) was born into a modest mercantile family in suburban Philadelphia. Trumbauer ended his formal education in a succession of local public schools by entering the Philadelphia architectural firm of George W. & William D. Hewitt as office boy. By 1890, he had opened his own office on that city's Chestnut Street. His early years of independent practice were largely devoted to speculative houses built by developers, but by the mid-1890s he was designing large houses for Philadelphia's Elkins and Widener families, both related by marriage. With three substantial commissions from these families under his belt by 1900, he was introduced to other wealthy Philadelphia families, including the newly rich Edward J. Berwind (1848-1936), the country's most prosperous coal dealer, who gave Trumbauer his entrée into Rhode Island with The Elms (1899-1901) on Newport's Bellevue Avenue (NHL, Bellevue Avenue Historic District, listed 11 May 1976). While these early commissions included essays in the English-castle mode, such as Grey Towers (1893-96) for William Welsh Harrison in Glenside, Pennsylvania, or half-timbered Elizabethan, like Cheltenham House (1896, 1908) for George W. Elkins in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, his principal milieu was the Renaissance Revival, drawing most heavily on eighteenth-century French architecture, as he did at The Elms.

Trumbauer's work in Rhode Island was a combination of commissions garnered from Philadelphians and those from elsewhere impressed by his work in Newport. The example of The Elms brought the commission for another French-inspired house, Chetwode (1900-02);

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destroyed 1972), for New Yorkers William Storrs and Annie Raynor Wells, farther south on Bellevue Avenue. Back in Philadelphia, he designed the townhouse for Edward Collings Knight, Jr, and his wife Clara Waterman Dwight Knight, completed on Locust Street in 1903, followed immediately by their summer house, Claradon Court, 620 Bellevue Avenue, Newport (NHL, Bellevue Avenue Historic District, listed 11 May 1976), this time in the mode of Palladian England. A fourth Trumbauer house on Bellevue, Miramar (1912-14), is also French in inspiration, commissioned by George D. and Eleanor Elkins Widener just before Mr. Widener's fatal voyage on the *Titanic*.

In 1927, Edward C. Knight, Jr, and his second wife, Marie Louise LeBel Knight, turned to Trumbauer again for a new summer house; this time in the more rural waterfront setting of Indian Avenue, which better suited the couple's active sporting life. By this time, architectural taste among wealthy Newport cottagers had substantially shifted from the almost-palatial formalism of eighteenth-century models to smaller-scale, more informal houses inspired by late medieval French and English sources.⁵ Trumbauer had executed a large house in this mode for the Wideners' daughter, Eleanor Widener Dixon at Ronaele Manor (1923-25) in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, which the Knights surely knew. The smaller-scale house that they commissioned for Indian Avenue, Stonybrook, was one of the more modest of Trumbauer's country house designs, but it is nevertheless as calculatingly proportioned and exquisitely detailed as the large-scale commissions for which he is better known.

Located outside the heart of Newport, the Indian Avenue Historic District vividly conveys a distinct sense of time and place that shares in many of the social and architectural qualities found at the center of the resort community, but adapted here to the distinctive character of its once-secluded rural location

⁵ Yarnall, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-164.

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10 — Boundary Justification

The boundaries have been drawn to include the contributing architectural and landscape features of the historic Stonybrook Estate, following its historic property lines as much as possible. Some non-historic buildings have been included where the surrounding landscape character remains intact.

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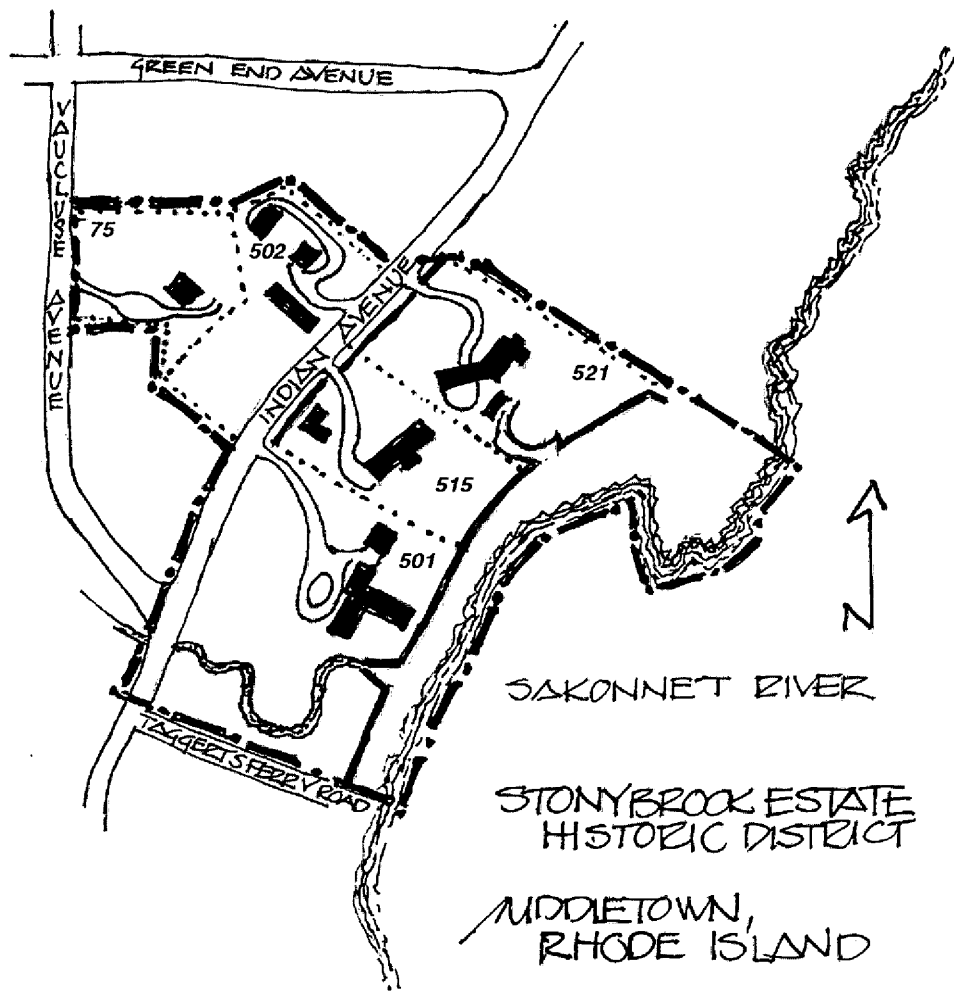
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STONYBROOK ESTATE
HISTORIC DISTRICT
MIDDLETOWN,
RHODE ISLAND
SKETCH PLAN - NOT TO SCALE