

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:
Rhode Island

COUNTY:
Newport

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	JUN 30 1972

1. NAME

COMMON:
Newport Artillery Company Armory

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
23 Clark Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE Rhode Island, 02840	CODE 44	COUNTY: Newport	CODE 005
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3. CLASSIFICATION

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

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Newport Artillery Company

STREET AND NUMBER:
23 Clark Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE:
Rhode Island, 02840

CODE:
44

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:
Broadway

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE:
Rhode Island, 02840

CODE:
44

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Statewide Survey of Historic Buildings

DATE OF SURVEY:
 Federal
 State
 County
 Local

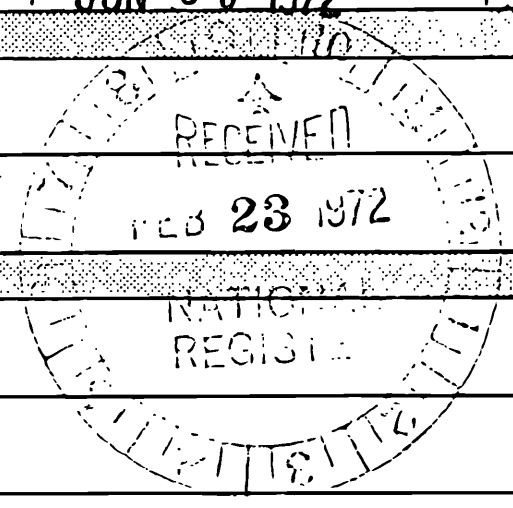
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
State House, 90 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Providence

STATE:
Rhode Island, 02903

CODE:
44



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

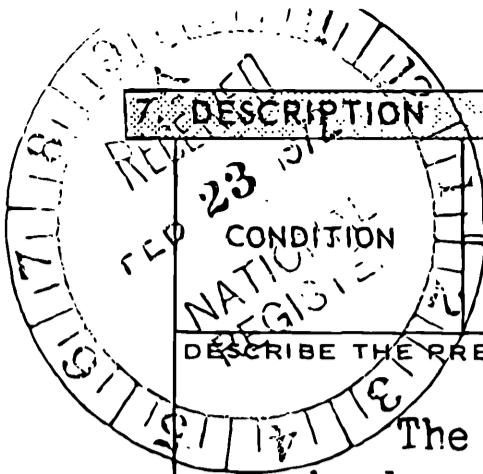
STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER: JUN 30 1972

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Newport Artillery Company, an organization chartered in 1741, raised money in 1835 to build its permanent quarters on Clarke Street, a locale that had been prominent in Newport's history from the time of the city's first settlement. Alexander MacGregor, a stonemason from Scotland who was responsible for much of Newport's early-19th-century stone building, was hired to design the armory, and Duress and McWade were taken on as contractors. MacGregor piled walls of random ashlar (native stone given by Enoch Hazard from his Rocky Farm) and topped them with a modest gable to create a building of simple, but relatively heavy, temple form. He rusticated the corners and the main doorway. A long lintel over the double, panelled doors reads "1741. Artillery Company." (In photographs taken in 1870, one can see that the gable was then undecorated, the doors were diagonally planked, and an extremely tall flagpole stood on the sidewalk in front.) The building was set on a narrow lot, donated by Audley Clarke, a Newport merchant and benefactor, with 28 feet of frontage; and the structure itself was originally no more than 50 feet deep. In 1873 there was an addition to the rear, increasing the number of east-west bays from four to eight. While this addition distorted the originally fine proportions of MacGregor's design, the armory--situated as closely as it is between the Second Congregational Church on the right and the Robert Stevens house on the left--was not really impaired in general appearance. Its architecture was harmed, however, in 1906 when the gable was raised to make way for a second story. Though the new stonework and brickwork are well matched to the old, the added height and the introduction of five windows across the upper façade have marred the Greek-Revival intentions of the original design. A granite belt course was then added along the sides of the building. There are iron bars on these front windows and iron shutters for the windows on the sides of the building. Of visual interest is a large, relief-carved wooden eagle applied to the gable or tympanum in 1880. Taken from the paddle-box of the S. S. "Metropolis," the bird is set against a red-painted wooden semicircular background. Two triangular panels with embedded cannonballs flank the eagle emblem.

The interior is open and rather plain, with a ceiling height of about 15 feet. The panelled wainscoting that was probably once varnished is now painted a light green to match the plaster walls. The floor is of wooden planks, and the ceiling is now of 19th-century pressed tin with an elaborate lace-like pattern. The symmetrically-molded architraves of the doors have circle-in-square block ornament at the upper corners. The front and rear stairways of the long first-floor drill hall (now used as a museum) have simple square wooden balustrading. The back stairs were added when the building was heightened, and include a large podium landing, perhaps meant as a speaking or command platform. Photographs taken in 1908 show the new upstairs lounge rooms which were finished in dark panelling; the central upstairs room still has its large hearth; but this suite is not now in use. The cellar, long used as a rifle-practice range, runs the full length of the building and has stone walls and a wood-beamed ceiling.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Downing, Antoinette F., and Scully, Vincent J., Jr.: The Architectural Heritage of Newport. Rhode Island, 1640-1915 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1952), pp. 102, 112, 194.
 Manuel, Elton: History of Clarke Street (unpublished manuscript, Newport, Rhode Island, 1970).

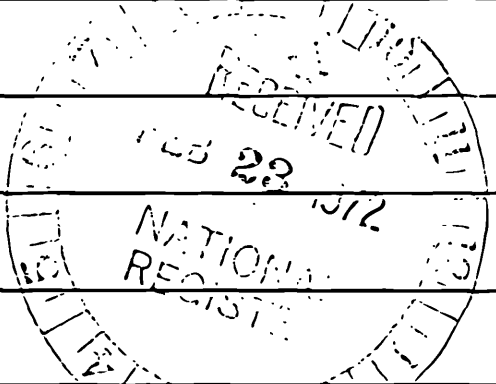
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		41° 29' 21.54" N	71° 18' 51.61" W	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
B. Christopher Bene, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission DATE: September 25, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:
State House, 90 Smith Street

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

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

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

National State Local

Name Frederick G. Wainman

Title State Liaison Officer

Date February 14, 1972

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Robert M. Utley
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date 6/30/72

ATTEST:
William H. Hunt
 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

19/306000/4593970
 13-10-72
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 SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1835, 1873, 1906

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Owing to the antiquity of the militia organization it houses, and to its presence in this historic block, the Clarke Street armory has much to speak for it besides its architecture. The Newport Artillery Company's earliest origin was in 1639 as a "trained band" against hostile Indians; and, according to Elton Manuel's detailed account, in 1741

"a group of 18 men, calling themselves the 'principal inhabitants of the town' applied to the General Assembly for a charter to form an organization ... the charter was approved. They chose Jahleel Brenton as their first commanding officer."

When, nearly one hundred years later, they desired a permanent and, if possible, monumental armory they employed Alexander MacGregor, a Scotch stonemason/who also built the fine granite walls of the early part of Fort Adams, the Perry Mill, Stone Villa, Swanhurst, and the Thorn house in Newport.

In adapting rough-laid local stone to the smooth rigidities of the Greek Revival style so popular in the early part of the 19th century, the armory is unusually successful: MacGregor's handling of it is strong and confident (even if quoining seems out of place in this style). The building in old photographs and restored sketches depends on its striking proportions for its effect--the simplicity of its rectangular and superposed triangular masses, the flatness of the façade, the primitively "defensive" heavy inset doors.

The armory's architectural individuality and long-established place in the community of Newport, as well as its present use as a highly instructive military museum, make it an integral part of the fabric of the Clarke Street neighborhood, and indeed of Newport's overall heritage.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS