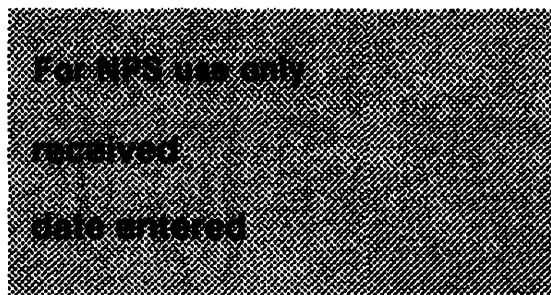


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NAME: Louis Kotzow House

LOCATION: 641 East Avenue

OWNER: Ann Harris  
641 East Avenue  
Pawtucket, Rhode Island

CONDITION: Good; altered; original site

DESCRIPTION:

The Modern Gothic Louis Kotzow House occupies a large and shady lot on the southwesterly corner of East Avenue and Progress Street a few blocks north of the Providence city line. Directly across Progress Street sits a closely related dwelling (the Scholze-Sayles House, 625 East Avenue, also included in this nomination) of virtually the same age and of strikingly similar design. Behind these two 1870s Modern Gothic cottages, a modest late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century residential neighborhood extends westward and southward. Across East Avenue and northward lies the fashionable early-to-mid-twentieth-century neighborhood called Oak Hill. The only outbuilding now standing on the Kotzow lot is an early twentieth-century single-bay hip-roofed, wooden garage fronting upon Progress Street. A story-and-a-half wooden dwelling, the Kotzow House is laid out in a more or less L-shaped form. Its two steeply gabled main roofs are repeatedly broken by cross gables and gabled wall dormers, resulting in active profile. Single-story bay windows sprout upon the projecting central pavilion on the northern side of the house and on the projecting end pavilion at the northern corner of the East Avenue facade. A three-bay, single-story porch extends southward from this end pavilion across the remainder of the East Avenue facade. In purely formal terms, the house is very close to being a mirror image of the Scholze-Sayles House next door.

The building's clapboarded exterior walls are accented by a variety of typical late nineteenth-century decorative details: pierced brackets under the wide eaves; an ornamental beltcourse at the second floor level; and projecting, chamfered window frames which, in the two bay windows, are developed into a full-blown "stick style" elaboration of the entire bay window feature. The front porch is handsomely detailed; chamfered posts are joined by an intricate jigsaw railing while supporting an elaborate wooden frieze on pairs of gracefully arched brackets.

The main entrance into the house is located in the center of the East Avenue facade under the northernmost bay of the porch. The interior of the Kotzow House is remarkably intact. Both architectural detail and floor plan remain essentially unaltered.

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The house follows an L-shaped hall plan with a parlor, now used as a library, opening off the hall on the south and a double parlor, with heavy solid paneled sliding doors still operable between the two rooms, opening on the north. Behind the double parlor is the dining room and behind the single south parlor, separated by a door from the deep front entry hall, is the stairhall. Beyond the stairhall is the kitchen, now modernized, linked to the dining room on the north by the original pantry with built-in floor-to-ceiling cupboards and sink.

Notable details on the first floor include narrow-strip, bordered, hardwood floors throughout, high (c. 10-foot) ceilings with bold plaster cornices and cast plaster circular medallions, simplified gray marble mantelpieces back to back in the north rear parlor and the dining room, the somewhat more elaborate mantel in the library, the molded plate-rail circling the dining room at a height of about five feet, floor-length window frames with their sunken panels beneath the sills, bay windows on the east and north flanks of the double parlor, heavy paneled doors, and the staircase itself, rising in three broad runs to the second floor. The staircase has heavy turned balusters, delicate sawn scroll-work applied to the riser ends, and a massive newel ornamented with a combination of Eastlake and neo-greque motifs. Another detail worth mentioning is the built-in closet or wardrobe at the very back of the hall with chamfered framing members. A similar, slightly less ornate version of this wardrobe is built in on the second floor at the head of the stairs.

Directly over the staircase is a rectangular skylight edged with a narrow border of red and white (possible Bohemian) etched glass, reminiscent of the etched glass in the round-arched top panels of the front door. The skylight is now covered with insulation, which darkens the aspect of the hall considerably. Two broad arched openings define the L-shape of the second floor hall and lead to the four large slanting-ceilinged bedrooms which are extremely simple in their finish. Two bathrooms have been added on this floor, (one probably whenever indoor plumbing was first installed,) although no period fixtures remain, and one about 1972 in a partitioned-off section of the present master bedroom.

The Kotzow House, all in all, retains its character as a comfortable, unpretentious, but carefully executed family residence of considerable grace and charm.

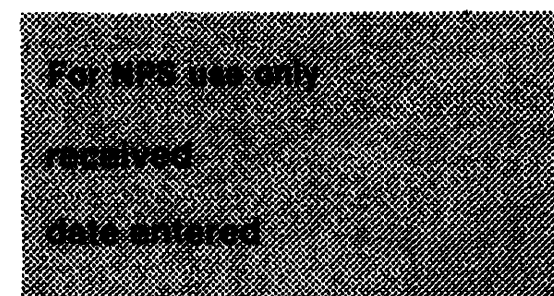
PERIOD: 1800-1899

AREAS: Architecture, Social/Humanitarian

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SPECIFIC DATE: c. 1875

ARCHITECT: Unknown

**SIGNIFICANCE:** The Louis Kotzow House is historically significant as one of a closely related pair of architecturally distinguished cottages erected for members of the German Cooperative Land Association of Providence in the mid-1870s. The Kotzow House and the neighboring Scholze-Sayles House flanked the East Avenue entrance to an 1873 subdivision which was apparently intended to be a strictly German residential enclave in southern Pawtucket. The Association was dissolved, however, in 1878, and the Scholze-Sayles and Kotzow houses are the major surviving reminders of the organizations' existence. The two houses are, in addition, architecturally significant as a closely related pair of handsomely detailed Modern Gothic cottages of the 1870s.

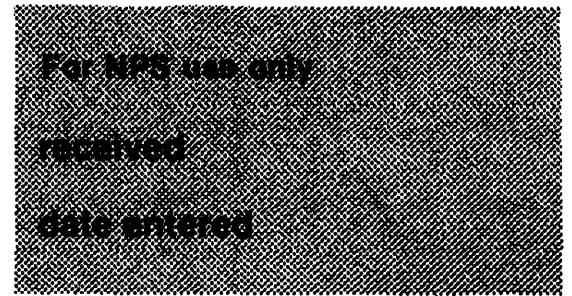
The German Cooperative Land Association of Providence was incorporated in May of 1873, its apparent purpose being the assistance of its members in the acquisition of house lots in the Providence area. To this end, the Association purchased 22½ acres of land off East Avenue in southern Pawtucket in July of 1873, and quickly subdivided the tract into house lots. (The names of several of the original streets in this subdivision--Progress, Unity, and Germania Streets--are a curious reminder of the Association's character.) House lots here were offered for sale to Association members only, and each purchaser's deed carried a restriction granting the Association the right of first refusal should a member choose to sell. Restricted by its constitution to a corporate life of just five years, the Association was disbanded in 1878, and its assets were distributed amongst its sixty-odd members. At the time of dissolution there were perhaps a dozen houses standing on the Association's plat.

Louis Kotzow, a Pawtucket jeweler and a member of the German Cooperative Land Association, purchased the five lots of land on the southwestern corner of East Avenue and Progress Street early in 1875. His house seems to have been erected on this property very shortly thereafter. Kotzow and his family lived in the house for the following decade, and the Pawtucket directories for this period suggest that Kotzow's business, "Louis A. Kotzow & Co., manufacturing jewelers," was carried on somewhere within the house, or at least upon the premises. By the time Kotzow was ready to sell his property, in 1885, the German Cooperative Land Association had been dead for seven years, and the ideal of German enclave had apparently been abandoned--the new owners' names were John and Rosanna O'Connor.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: The nominated property comprises Pawtucket Assessor's Plat 63B Lot 575, and includes the Kotzow House and its immediate surroundings.

ACREAGE: Less than one; 10,629 square feet

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE: Local

UTM: A 19 301610 4636800

(See Continuation Sheet #92)