

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

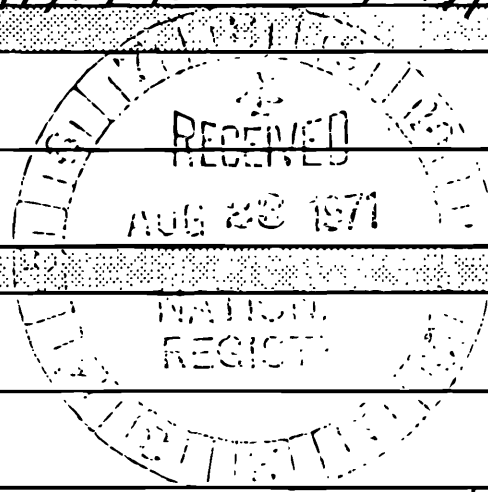
(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 11,944,0021	DATE 9/10/71

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
The Breakers

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Vanderbilt (Cornelius, II) House



**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Ochre Point Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:  
Newport

STATE: Rhode Island, 02840      CODE: 44      COUNTY: Newport      CODE: 005

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<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 type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
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) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME: Alice Hadik, Gladys Talbot Peterson, Sylvia S. Szapary, Nandine Eltz, Gladys R. Thomas, Cornelia Carter Roberts, Eugene B. Roberts, Jr.

STREET AND NUMBER:  
The Breakers, Ochre Point Avenue

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:

DATE OF SURVEY:       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:      STATE:      CODE:

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER: 11,944,0021

DATE: 9/10/71

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7. DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Breakers was designed by Richard Morris Hunt for Cornelius Vanderbilt, II, and was constructed in the years 1893-1895. It is a large rectangular structure (about 250 by 150 feet), steel-framed and faced with limestone, of three apparent storeys (and a fourth masked below the cornice) beneath a high, decked hipped roof of tile. It rests on a low, balustraded, grassed podium in the middle of flat lawns and, to the east, overlooks the sea. To the west are the entrance drives and gateways.

In general, the exterior style is that of the Italian High Renaissance--of the XVI-Century palaces of Genoa and Turin. There is much rich but controlled academic adornment: columns, pilasters, rustication, arcades, an elaborate bracketted cornice, heavily-capped chimneys etc. Entrance is through a prominent one-storey porte-cochère on the west front; a slight projection of the south front has a two-storey semi-circular bay; two arms extend east from the main block to embrace arcaded loggias at first- and second-floor levels and a balustraded, unroofed gallery at third-floor level; a low kitchen wing forms a northern extension. Immense and overpowering in scale and mass, the house is nevertheless correct and handsome in style and ornament, as one might expect in a work of Richard Hunt.

Containing over seventy rooms, the house was intended, and used, for entertaining on a grand scale. The first floor is given over entirely to this purpose. Around a large, galleried cortile which is two storeys in height--from which the main stair rises and seaward loggias open, are the several formal salons and the "state" dining-room, which is also of two-storey height. Ornamentation throughout all the reception areas is extremely lavish. The interiors reflect the joint efforts of a corps of decorators; many craftsmen were brought from Europe. Various marbles, carved stone, carved applied wooden trim, moulded and gilded plaster, ceiling paintings etc. are all employed, and there are great chandeliers and torchères of bronze and of crystal. Furnishings of palace proportions and of period styles, especially designed for the house, are seen, as are draperies and upholstery of rich damasks. This opulence (often out of control in other residences of "the Gilded Age") was all carefully planned through the taste and genius possessed by Richard Hunt, and therefore all of the elaborate decorative detail falls into its rightful place as an ordered and integral part of the over-all design of The Breakers.

On the second and third floors are bedroom suites for the owner's family and for guests. These are treated formally but simply, mainly in panelled and damask-hung adaptations of French XVIII-Century styles; they were decorated and furnished under the supervision of the quiet and sensitive architect-decorator, Ogden Codman. The fourth floor provides quarters for the large number of domestics required for this house and the way of life which it contained.

(See Continuation Sheet.)

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) 1893-1895

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               |  | <u>Social history</u>                               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Military               | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            |   |  | _____   |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Breakers is surely, and was intentionally, the grandest of many grand summer houses erected for the extremely social summer colonists of Newport--for those Americans who had accumulated great fortunes in the XIX Century and who wished to emulate here the princely grandeurs of Europe in previous centuries. Always famous in Newport for its size, its luxury, the formality of its entertaining and the formidable social dictatorship exercised by its builder's widow when the house was lived in, it is now famous throughout the United States as a monument to its era and as a well-shown tourist attraction. In American architectural and social history this house is the palace and performing-platform par excellence of the very rich. It is also a high point, an outstanding production, in the career of the brilliantly adaptive and eclectic, unusually tasteful architect, Richard Morris Hunt.

Since the late 1940's this house has been leased by the Vanderbilt heirs to The Preservation Society of Newport County which, with the greatest imaginable care for such a treasure, opens The Breakers for several months each year as a house museum. During these months, many thousands of the public pass through the house in groups escorted by knowledgeable guides; there is also a well-written guide to the building published by the society. Additionally, the house is made available for cultural purposes and for social functions similar to those for which it was originally designed: during the summer seasons the great rooms and cortile have frequently been a background for concerts, ballets, receptions, dinners and balls--especially memorable occasions when the house has been fully illuminated at night.

The builder's heirs are to be commended for entrusting The Breakers to the Preservation Society, and that society is to be commended for the manner in which it displays, interprets and utilises this landmark mansion.

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. 147, 148, 160, 161.  
 Hitchcock, Henry-Russell, Jr.: Rhode Island Architecture (Providence, Rhode Island, 1939), p. 61.  
 Schuyler, Montgomery: American Architecture and Other Writings (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1961), pp. 550-551.  
 Andrews, Wayne: Architecture, Ambition and Americans (New York, 1955), pp. 183, 203.

(See Continuation Sheet.)

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			LATITUDE		LONGITUDE
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	41°	28'	15"	71°	18'	02"
NE	41°	28'	15"	71°	17'	20"
SE	41°	28'	07"	71°	17'	19"
SW	41°	28'	07"	71°	18'	01"

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 15.1 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
Richard B. Harrington, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission      DATE: April 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 R. Williams

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: August 17, 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Ernest A. Connally  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

SEP 10 1971

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:  
William H. Bennett  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date: SEP 3 - 1971

UTM REF 18-10-25 JUN  
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 19/307910/4593110  
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 119,440021	DATE 9/10/71

(Number all entries)

7. Description.

The site upon which The Breakers stands--about thirteen acres--is not a large one (few in Newport are); indeed, it is really not large enough for this palace. Therefore, excepting the grassed and paved platform upon which the house stands, there was wisely no attempt to introduce terraces, gardens, parterres, ornamental plantings. There are, however, trees--now old and large--partially bordering the property and flanking its entrance drives, and there are some low shrubberies and trimmed evergreens strategically but "informally" placed.

The house has not been used as a residence since 1944, but it and its contents, the grounds, the magnificent ironwork of fence and gates have all remained intact and have been impeccably maintained ever since the Vanderbilt family first took occupancy in July, 1895.

9. Major Bibliographical References.

Smales, Holbert T.: "The Breakers," Newport, Rhode Island (Newport, Rhode Island, 1970), 40 pp.



