1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: GRISWOLD, JOHN N.A., HOUSE

Other Name/Site Number: Newport Art Museum and Art Association

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 76 Bellevue Avenue Not for publication:__

City/Town: Newport Vicinity:__

State: Rhode Island County: Newport Code: RI005 Zip Code: 02840

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:	X	Building(s):	X
Public-Local:	___	District:	___
Public-State:	___	Site:	___
Public-Federal:	___	Structure:	___
		Object:	___

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
3	___buildings
___	___ sites
___	___ structures
___	___ objects
3	___ Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 3

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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.

Signature of Certifying Official Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

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
___ Determined eligible for the National Register
___ Determined not eligible for the National Register
___ Removed from the National Register
___ Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: DOMESTIC Sub: Single dwelling
Secondary structure

Current: RECREATION AND CULTURE Sub: Museum

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: LATE VICTORIAN: Stick/Eastlake

Materials

Foundation: Stone
Walls: Wood
Roof: Stone
Other: Brick (chimneys)

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Exterior

The Griswold House is a 2½ story wood frame building sheltered by a steep, complex slate roof comprised of a central mansard with multiple intersecting gables and dormers and covered with red, dark gray and light gray slate set in a diamond pattern. Exterior sheathing consists of clapboard walls ornamented with contrasting simulated half-timbering. Adding to the polychrome effect, three red brick chimneys with decorative concrete panels and concrete caps rise above the slate roof. Deep overhanging eaves, balconies and overhanging gables are supported on heavy braces often ornamented with pendants. Irregular in plan, with projecting polygonal and rectangular bays, an asymmetrically placed porte cochere, a deep veranda on the west and a portion of the south elevations, and an offset rear ell, the entire composition comprises a picturesque silhouette. The Griswold House is acknowledged as the first example of the mature stick style.

The house stands on its original site, which is bounded by Old Beach Road on the north, to the east by Liberty Street (formerly State Street), to the south by Downing Street and to the west by Bellevue Avenue (formerly South Touro Street). The original granite wall topped by a lighter colored granite capstone runs along Bellevue Avenue. It is interrupted at the northwest corner by two granite gate posts marking the original driveway. The wall turns the corner continuing for a short distance on Old Beach Road where it is continued by a hedge along Old Beach Road to the present driveway entrance. Another opening has been cut in the wall (1920) on Bellevue Avenue toward the south end to provide an entrance to the walkway leading to the Cushing Memorial. The granite wall also just turns the corner at Downing Street and a chain link fence encloses the remainder of the lot. The site is relatively level, sloping down slightly at the east along Liberty Street. Several mature trees are located on the lot, a few of which date from the construction of the house and others may date from a 1921 Olmsted Brothers landscape design. For the most part, shrubs and plants date from the late 20th century. A paved driveway enters from the northwest corner and continues toward the porte cochere on the north elevation. Much of the area north of the house has been paved for parking. Parking lots have also been built along Liberty Street.

Set on a granite foundation, the building is set well back from the street, and is partially obscured by large trees. The main portion of the building, which is the western section, is in its original location. The east ell is a later addition, which consists of the original Hunt designed stable that had been altered and moved in 1920 to its present location and attached to the east elevation of the house, which was the former kitchen ell.

Main House

Contributing to the picturesque effect, each elevation is asymmetrical with single, paired and bay windows. The half timber detail is laid out in a rectangular grid which frames the windows and is figuratively reinforced with diagonal or cross bracing. The half timbering is an applied detail and does not represent or reflect the structural framing of the house. Articulated with chamfered edges, the half timbering at the corners of the building is detailed with a three-quarter round molding. The three-quarter round is also used to frame all of the window openings. Carved detail found throughout, such as pendants and rafter ends, is generally simple and heavy. Two

early photographs show the house unpainted, a temporary condition that has been attributed to the scarcity of paint during the Civil War. It was soon painted in a polychromatic scheme consisting of dark yellow clapboards, brown wood trim and dark green, nearly black window sash.

The porte cochere, one of the most notable elements of the facade, was described by the critic Montgomery Schuyler as "a spirited and admirable piece of design, in which the treatment of the material is as idiomatic as it is artistic and in which even the emergence of the Mansard roof contributes to the success of a successful and piquant composition."[1] Located on the north elevation, the porte cochere is two-stories in height supported on a brownstone arch. A wood frame balcony projects from the north elevation of the second story and the straight-sided mansard roof is intersected by projecting gabled dormers on the east and west elevations and by a projecting gabled pavilion on the north elevation. Curved braces at the corners of the brownstone piers support the balcony and the second story of the porte cochere. On the north elevation of the main block, two gabled projecting pavilions frame the porte cochere. The pavilions are similar; each has a rectangular projecting bay at the first story which continues up to progressive overhangs at the second and third stories. Between the pavilions on the roof, a single gabled dormer ornamented with carved brackets contains a gothic sash. The pavilion is repeated elsewhere on the building, and at each of the pavilions, the third story overhang is carried by heavy braces, and the gable eaves are supported by knee braces with pendants.

At the east end of the north elevation, the kitchen ell is connected by a 1 ½ story recessed section which has a hip roofed dormer that interrupts the roof line. The former kitchen ell, topped by a jerkinhead gable, projects north from the plane of the main block. (The remainder of the east ell is described under the stable/Ilgenfritz Gallery.)

The west elevation is covered at the first story by a deep veranda with a low pitched roof supported by square posts and knee braces. Like the house, the plan of the veranda is irregular. It has a canted northeast corner, and it juts out slightly near the center of the facade. Echoing the half-timbering on the house, all of the posts have chamfered corners, and the balustrade consists of a wide railing supported on vertical posts and cross braces. The porch originally had no railing. This railing matches that found at the porte cochere balcony and also was originally found at the southeast entry porch, since altered. In the north bay of this elevation, a three story polygonal bay forces its way through the roofline forming a tower. A gabled projecting pavilion, similar to those found on the north elevation, is located at the south corner of the west elevation. There are some minor differences. At the first story under the veranda, the bay is polygonal rather than rectangular, and the second story overhang is supported by heavy curved braces with simple pendants.

The veranda continues along the first story of the south elevation from the southwest corner to a projecting gabled pavilion matching that found on the west elevation. Uncovered, the open porch continues around the pavilion and ends at the east side of the pavilion. A section of the open porch was removed (1956) in front of the bay to the east of the pavilion. The south elevation continues with a three story, rectangular, hipped roof bay which projects up through the line of the main roof. A two story projecting pavilion topped by a jerkinhead roof similar to the north

[1]Montgomery Schuyler, "The Works of the Late Richard M. Hunt," *Architectural Record* 5 (Oct. - Dec. 1895): 101.

elevation of the kitchen ell is located at the southeast corner. Also at the southeast corner, an entrance porch leads into the office and the former butler's pantry. The porch has been enclosed with vertical siding. There is a jog, where the east ell of the house is set back from the south elevation. The first two bays of the east ell are the original kitchen wing, and the remainder of the ell consists of the former stable that was moved in 1920 and attached to the east elevation of the house to form a gallery.

Doors

The main entrance is under the porte cochere on the north elevation. The original main entrance doors have been replaced with paired wood doors with full length glass panels. The original doors are visible in the pre-1895 photograph of the porte cochere and are described in the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation. They are paired four-paneled doors with chamfered woodwork and may be located on the property. A wood and glass entrance door at the northeast corner of the main house appears to be a new door, but may have been based on an earlier door. It has a four-light upper panel and cross bracing on the lower section of the wood panels. An aluminum and glass vestibule and door were installed in 1988 on the south veranda providing access through a former a window in the library. Wood and glass panel doors leading into the office and butler's pantry at the southeast corner are probably original and had been exterior doors.

Windows

Windows typically diminish in height from the first to the third story. Most of the first story windows that look out onto the veranda or onto the open porch from the main rooms are full length French windows. In each window, paired three light casement sash are topped by a two light transom. A variation is found in the polygonal west bay, which has wooden lower panels on the operable sash. Other first story windows and most of the windows at the second story are two-over-four double hung sash. The four-light lower sash have a heavy center mullion that suggests the center stile of the French windows. Casement sash found at the second story over the porte cochere have diamond panes at the center. Most of the attic story, some second story windows (N and S elevations, under the jerkinhead gables and at the SE corner) and first story windows at the pantry and at the 1½ story connector to the kitchen ell contain double-hung sash with diamond panes. At the northwest corner, on the north elevation, a two-story double width window was installed at the second and third stories by the Art Association in 1916. It is glazed by 9" x 12" panes, which overlap vertically so that the window has only vertical mullions. Small windows on either side of the main entrance contain one-over-one double hung sash. Most of the sash are original and retain some early or original glazing.

Stable/Ilgenfritz Gallery

The original stable was located at the northeast corner of the property. It was at that time 1½ stories in height and had a different roof from the existing structure. During the 1916 renovations conducted by the Art Association of Newport, the stable was converted to three studios on the first floor. A new floor and floor framing were installed at that time.

Due to a demand for larger gallery and meeting space, the stable was relocated in 1920 to its current site and attached to the east end of the house. At that time, a brick chimney that rose through the kitchen and second floor was removed down to the basement. Originally at grade,

the stable was raised on a stone foundation in order to meet the height of the first floor in the main house. The stable now sits on a foundation of random coursed ashlar.

The present east ell (now known as the Ilgenfritz Gallery) consists of the former kitchen ell and the stable. Approximately rectangular in plan, it repeats much of the vocabulary of the main house, but is generally more simplified. In contrast to the main house, the elevations are essentially symmetrical and the slate mansard roof dominates most of the ell. A large skylight covers most of the upper slope of the mansard. Jerkinhead gables flank the east and west ends of the north elevation and a single jerkinhead gable at the east end of the south elevation is balanced by the remnant of the mansard roof of the kitchen wing on the west end. On the north elevation, a central pedimented dormer contains a single triangular diamond paned sash.

Some of the sheathing and detail may date from the 1920 alterations. The walls at the first story are sheathed with clapboard and simulated half-timbering. The east elevation has no applied half timber. A molded skirt or drip mold runs above the first story at the north and east elevations and wraps around to the east bay of the south elevation. The south elevation originally had no half timber, and the existing detail is more shallow and has a shallow chamfer compared to that found on the main house. At the second story, the north and east elevations and the east gable of the south elevation are clad with board and batten siding. The remainder of the second story at the south elevation (which was added in 1920) is clapboard with half timber. Windows and double doors at the balconies have diamond paned sash. It is assumed that the entire mansard roof was installed in 1920, although the framing of the north elevation may be original. A large north window fills a double bay at the first story in the east bay and lights a studio on the interior. It has vertical mullions only and overlapping glazing similar to that at the northwest corner of the main house. It was probably added in 1916 in an opening that had been a carriage entrance. Also on the north elevation, concrete steps lead up to a single wood and glass panel door topped by a diamond paned transom. Narrow steps run along the south elevation leading down to the basement under the kitchen.

The south elevation has two groups of windows consisting of a long band of transom windows over a band of narrow windows. An original door located between the windows has been replaced with clapboard. One pedestrian door and one wide door open onto a concrete loading dock, which is set on a stone foundation. A balcony under the east gable shelters the wide door, which is flanked by sidelights. At the second story balcony, two sets of narrow double doors flanked by sidelights are topped by a transom. The doors and windows have diamond panes.

The symmetrical east elevation has two second story balconies set under gabled dormers. The wood detail is surprisingly elaborate on these balconies which have carved openwork balustrades, pendants at the balcony newel posts, square paneled columns supporting the gables and finials rising at the peak of the gable. First story windows are set below each of the balconies. All of the first story windows in the east ell have been filled.

Interior

Upon entering the building there is a tiled open vestibule, leading to a broad flight of five steps, placed off-center to the entrance doors. The stairs lead up to the main floor of the house and the main stair hall, which is open three stories to the attic. Continuing south on axis with the

entrance there is a square antechamber that leads into an hexagonal alcove, which looks out onto the south side of the veranda and the lawn beyond. The primary rooms are all entered from the stair hall; doors at the canted southeast and southwest corners of the stair hall lead at the southeast to the Drury Gallery/dining room and at the southwest to the library. The Wright Gallery/parlor is entered to the west. A wide corridor runs directly east from the stair hall to the Ilgenfritz Gallery. This corridor had been extended when the east wing was converted to a gallery in 1916. Sometime after 1969, a pair of wood panel doors and transom were removed from the opening into this corridor. A former guest room, now the Griffon Shop, is located just off of the corridor to the northeast.

Paul Baker, who has written extensively on Hunt's life and work, offers his impression of the interior: "The openness of plan invites one to wander from one room to another. The many bays in the several principal rooms, as well as the octagonal shape of the dining room and library and the broken octagonal shape of the hall, give a sense of discovery in each area, and with the rich paneling and the varied timbered members the interior spaces provide a fascinating play of light and shadow. In a rather informal manner, Hunt had adapted well the Beaux-Arts lesson of the importance of relationships and the flow of interior spaces to a dwelling."[2]

The exterior theme of applied timber is carried into the stair hall which also has exposed wooden trusses under the balconies, paneled beams and stringers. The main feature of the stair hall, a broad dog-leg stair, leads up to the second floor, and access to the third floor is gained by a stair in the east corridor on the second floor. At the base of the main stair, a carved griffin stands guard at the main newel post from which rises a tall wooden lantern topped by a round globe. At the rest of the stair and third floor balcony, square paneled newels with 3/4-round corners are topped by heavy finials. At the upper stories they have heavy carved pendants. The balustrade consists of alternating cross braces and vertical posts infilled with delicately carved openwork. Floors in the stairhall are striped with alternating light and dark wood. The wood in the stairhall was identified as walnut, but a conservator with The Composition Group, Ltd. has conjectured that some of the wood in the stairhall may be mahogany.

The broad stair landing over the porte cochere and the walls of the stair are finished with paneled wainscoting. Two light fixtures at the landing appear to be original. They appear to be cast in bronze, and each has a graceful figure centered on a low pedestal. Projecting from the pedestal at an angle are two lanterns each with a light fixture rising from the spout. The figures may represent Hermes and Hebe. The landing provides a view of the full height of the stair hall and of the third floor balcony overlooking the space. Enclosed at the time of the HABS documentation, the later infill at the third floor balcony has since been removed.

The intimate hexagonal alcove is decorated at the ceiling with a cornice molding and a small ornate medallion. Wood and glass panel doors in the corners of the alcove provide access to the Drury Gallery and the library. Sliding doors from the anteroom also lead into the Drury Gallery and the Library. Heavy six panel doors with chamfered edges at the stiles and rails lead from the stair hall into the Drury Gallery, library and the Wright Gallery. Similar doors are also found at the main rooms at the second floor. Also notable are the original locks on many of the windows, the ornate enrichment and acorn details on the door hinges and silver plated brass door knobs on the doors to the primary rooms.

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[2]Paul R. Baker, *Richard Morris Hunt*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1980), p. 135.

Library
Octagonal in plan, the library is probably the most intact room in the house. The walls are paneled with wood, and the ceiling has paneled beams and wooden ribs. Carved pendants decorate the paneled beams, and elongated pendants drop at the intersection of the ribs. A chandelier that appears in the HABS photographs of the library was not original and has been removed since its weight was causing damage to the plaster ceiling. The ceiling was repaired and repainted ca. 1995 replicating the gold stars on a field of deep blue. The window hoods and molded door caps are supported on turned colonettes set on high pedestals and topped by stylized leaf capitals. Variations of a vine pattern are found on the window hoods, the transom screens, and the floor in the main library and decorating the risers of the entry steps in the main stair hall. The full height French windows topped by fixed transom windows have sliding, louvered shutters at the two south windows. The west window bay has paneled and louvered shutters which fold into the reveals. Sliding wood screens with carved vine openwork cover the transom windows. The walls are lined with three low glass-fronted bookcases, and the centerpiece of the north wall is the fireplace, which is faced with slate and framed by paneled pilasters supporting a paneled frieze and a shelf. This is surmounted by a wooden arched overmantle with a deep recess also framed by paneled pilasters. The arch originally provided a view through to the parlor, now the Wright Gallery, but the opening was filled when the gallery was created in 1916. The hearth is laid with ceramic tiles in tans, reddish browns, blues, and white. The cornerblocks of two bookcases and the panels in the mantelpiece held hand tinted lithographs that are being reinstalled in 1999. Tests by The Composition Group, Ltd. reveal that some of the wood in the library is mahogany. The conservator surmised that the library may contain some walnut as well and described the library floor as "a complex repeated parquet, with a marquetry border in a stylized vine motif, with oak leaves attached. It is composed of various woods, including cherry, oak, and walnut, among others."[3] The original brass light sconces in the library have been converted from gas to electric and are missing the original glass globes.

Wright Gallery/Parlor
The Wright Gallery is approximately rectangular in plan except for a projecting rectangular bay to the north and a polygonal bay to the west. According to the HABS documentation, the north window bay originally had paneled and louvered shutters which folded into reveals. Presently, two sliding doors with heavy moldings can close off the window bay. The polygonal west bay, which was closed off at the time of the HABS survey in the 1970s, was reopened ca. 1995. The original window shutters are now exposed, and the proscenium arch, similar to that on the north bay, was recreated. The walls of this room have been built out, concealing the original fireplace, a door to the library on the west side of the fireplace and any remaining baseboards. The cove molding at the ceiling and the fireplace hearth are still visible. One door has been removed from the doorway. Also closed in the remodeling was the glass window over the fireplace which permitted a view into the library. The inlaid floor was identified as oak by The Composition Group, Ltd. On either side of the fireplace are heavy panelled doors. The one to the southeast leads to the office and the one to the northeast leads to the former pantry.

Drury Gallery/Dining Room
Like the library, the Drury Gallery is octagonal in plan. As the result of an extensive restoration project in 1993-94, the room closely resembles its original appearance. The plaster walls were

[3]The Composition Group, Ltd. "Newport Art Museum - Consultant's Report," May 16, 1985, p. 2.

repainted based on a paint analysis. White paint was removed from the wood ceiling ribs, and pendants and black paint or stain was removed from the remainder of the wainscot and woodwork including the heavy carved mantelpiece which has dogs' heads carved in high relief at the spandrels. The mirrored overmantel appears to be original. The focal point of the ceiling is a large wooden ceiling medallion enriched with rope molding at the edges. On the south wall, the projecting bay window is set in a paneled recess which holds the paneled shutters for the full length windows. The floor is laid in a chevron pattern with alternating dark and light wood. The gallery now serves as the Croquet Hall of Fame and contains related exhibits.

The Griffon Shop/Guest Room
This room has a replacement hard wood floor and a simple mantelpiece, that appears to be a later replacement. The door to the east room has been closed off. The cornice molding is original and this room has what appears to be an original closet, which is unusual since most were removed when the Art Association acquired the building.

Coat Closet and Rest Rooms
Located east of the Griffon Shop, the coat room is entered from the corridor. Rectangular in plan, the north side of this space has been divided into two rest rooms. The carpet, partitions, and doors date from the 1970s.

Gallery
The corridor leading east from the main stair hall to the Ilgenfritz Gallery has a new wood floor that is slightly raised from the original floor and was most likely installed as part of the 1976-77 renovation. This corridor is now used as a gallery and there are no other distinguishing characteristics.

Second Floor

The second floor has wood floors, many of which are painted. The second floor landing is polygonal in plan and has a railing at the wide stair that looks back to the intermediate landing over the porte cochere.

The northwest room is a two-story space that was the former portrait studio. It is rectangular in plan except for the west polygonal bay that continues up the full height of the room. The third floor was removed in 1916, and beams span the room at the height of the former floor. The floor, which has a parquet border, is intact but in poor condition. The heavy carved fireplace with a delicate mirrored overmantel is painted white, but was originally not painted. A remnant of wallpaper preserved on the east wall had been behind the molding installed by the Art Association. The moldings were installed in 1916 to hang artwork and therefore the wallpaper probably dates from the Griswolds' occupancy. A door to the west of the fireplace that led into the southwest room has been removed. Lockers have been installed on either side of the fireplace.

The southwest room has two canted corners and partial paneled wainscoting on the south and west walls. The paneling matches that of the six panel doors which have chamfered stiles. The floor is covered with linoleum, and the original cornice molding remains at the ceiling. A later picture molding has been installed just below the original cornice molding. The fireplace mantel enriched with molded paneled pilasters and a single blue and white tile has been painted white. A

remnant of wallpaper preserved on the north wall had been behind the molding installed by the Art Association. As in the northwest room, the moldings were installed in 1916 to hang artwork and therefore the wallpaper probably dates from the Griswolds' occupancy. A door to the west of the fireplace has been removed and the opening filled.

The second floor library, designated the boudoir in one of Hunt's plans, has a paneled rectangular bay flanked by bookcases. It is entered from the stairhall through an anteroom and from adjoining rooms at the east and west through doors set in canted corners.

The center south room has two canted corners and a projecting south bay. It retains an original fireplace with a single blue and white tile. The heavy cornice molding is damaged showing cracks and chipping. The floor is covered with carpet. Most of the original paneled doors remain except for one door to the north of the fireplace which has been removed and the opening filled. The rectangular south bay has a paneled recess. This room retains the picture molding installed in 1916.

The southeast room, which was the design studio and later the print studio, is similar to that across the hall, with plaster walls, the 1916 picture molding and simple detail. The purpose of a window in the north wall of the southeast room is not clear.

The center north room is almost square in plan and retains much of its original fabric including the cornice molding, fireplace and window surround which has paneled wainscot below the window. The wide board floor is painted. The panels at the pilasters and frieze of the mantelpiece are filled with what might be Delft tiles, some of which are cracked. The north pilaster is covered suggesting the tiles are broken or missing. The two northeast rooms had served as a studio when the Art Association first moved in. Both rooms retain the picture molding installed in 1916. The eastern room, which is two steps lower than the main second floor, has plaster walls and simple detail.

A stair to the third floor is located on the south wall of the corridor that runs east from the stair hall. The dog leg stair with landing has turned balusters. A bathroom was installed in the southeast corner of the corridor. A change in the baseboard along the south wall of the corridor suggests there has been a change here. A fire stair was added in the 1980s at the northeast corner of this corridor leading down to a first floor exit.

The third floor rooms have plaster walls and ceilings and simple finishes similar to those in the northeast and southeast rooms. The southwest room in the attic does have low paneled wainscoting. Most have closets or storage spaces under the eaves and sloping ceilings with dormer windows at the exterior walls.

Ilgenfritz

Entered through two wood and glass panel doors at the east end of the corridor, the Ilgenfritz Gallery takes up most of the east ell. The large, two-story rectangular space measures 37 feet by 52 feet and has a cove ceiling that rises to a central skylight. The space was renovated in 1976-77 through the bequest of McNair Ilgenfritz. The parquet floor was most likely installed at that time. From two large beams, which span the ceiling running north-south, there are rails for hanging partitions. The walls have been built to hang exhibits and there are no windows in the

room. A door at the southeast corner of the room leads to a small entrance vestibule and back hall under the stairs, beyond which is the children's studio. Located at the eastern end of the former stable, the children's studio is an open space, rectangular in plan measuring 37 by 27 feet, with painted wood walls lighted by a large north window. On the second floor above the studio, there is a dark room at the north end, in an area that steps up from the main floor, and at the south end there is a small space that had recently served as the photo studio and formerly may have been the caretaker's apartment. The door and window surrounds are simple and the plain wood floor is in poor condition.

Howard Gardner Cushing Memorial Gallery

The Howard Gardiner Cushing Memorial Gallery is a one story concrete building designed in the Classical Revival style. The building's plan is approximately a rectangle with a projecting semicircular entry porch at the west elevation, a polygonal entry porch on the north elevation and a projecting rear wing at the southeast corner. The smooth concrete walls of the 1920 west section rise to a heavy sandstone entablature and the corners of the building are detailed with sandstone quoins. A plain concrete parapet rises above the cornice and rims the flat roof. The dominant feature of the west elevation is the central projecting entry porch surmounted by a shallow domed roof with a metal finial. Polished granite columns set on semicircular steps support the entablature that wraps the entire building. The acanthus leaf capitals appear to be executed in metal. A plaque set above the entrance is dedicated to Howard Gardiner Cushing (1869 - 1916) by his friends. Two small windows frame the west entrance porch, which shelters a pair of heavy paneled wood doors. The north and south elevations are relieved by three shallow niches set into the wall.

The east section of the building, constructed in 1989-90, is similar in style, but is slightly wider than the west section. Continuing the original materials and detailing, the east section of the building has quoins and niches on the south elevation similar to the original building and the cornice continues along the north and south elevations. Windows are inserted in the niches on the north elevation. The Doric north entry porch is approached from the east by a ramp that runs along the north elevation and has steps to the north and west.

Landscape

The layout of the lot illustrated in the 1876 Hopkins Atlas indicates a slightly curved drive that enters the property at the corner of Bellevue Avenue and Old Beach Road and runs east leading to a large circular drive under the porte cochere. This drive still remains. The 1870 description and some early photographs indicate that there had been more lawn south of the house, which is now largely filled by trees. Paved walks have been installed between the south porch of the Griswold House and the north entrance to the Cushing Memorial. A walk also has been installed from Bellevue Avenue to the west entrance to the Cushing Memorial and from the parking area at the east to each building.

Although no documentation has been found to determine who designed the landscape for the Griswolds, it is likely that this too was a notable feature of the property. In August of 1870 in

reporting on a charitable event held at the Griswold's, the *New York Post* described Mr. Griswold's lawn as "so very finely laid out, containing many rare shrubs and plants."[4]

Prompted by the relocation of the stable and the construction of the Cushing Memorial, both completed in 1920, the Art Association engaged the Olmsted Brothers to design the landscape. Henry Vincent Hubbard, the principal in charge, made several recommendations regarding the driveway, parking areas, entrances and exits from the property, proposed plantings and existing trees. In January of 1921, the Olmsted firm also supplied a planting plan and accompanying planting list. By 1923, it was reported that most of the plan for the grounds (presumably the Olmsted Bros. plan) had been carried out.[5] Since that time the property has experienced damage and loss of several trees from a number of storms and hurricanes, loss of trees through disease, additions of memorial plantings and trees, gifts of plantings and trees or relocation of plantings. Since the 1920s, at least two new planting or landscape plans have been commissioned. One was completed by 1971 by Mr. Rudy Favretti, from the University of Connecticut at Storrs, CT, and the second was a planting plan by Morgan Wheelock. Documentation from these plans has not been located. Except for the largest trees, most of the plantings do not date from the construction of the house or from the Olmsted plan.

[4] *New York Post*, August 4, 1870, Margery Deane Scrapbook, Newport Historical Society.
[5] Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1923.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:
Nationally: X Statewide:__ Locally:_

Applicable National Register Criteria: A_X B_ C_X D_

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A_ B_ C_ D_ E_ F_ G_

NHL Criteria: Criteria 1 and 4

NHL Theme(s): III. Expressing Cultural Values
2. visual and performing arts
5. architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE, ART

Period(s) of Significance: 1864 - 1948

Significant Dates: 1864; 1915; 1916; 1920

Significant Person(s): n/a

Cultural Affiliation: n/a

Architect/Builder: Hunt, Richard Morris, Architect
Cranston, William S. & Burdick, Charles H., Builders

Historic Contexts: XVI. Architecture
J. Stick Style

XXIV. Painting and Sculpture
K. Supporting Institutions

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Completed in 1864, the John N. A. Griswold house possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Identified by Vincent Scully, Jr. as the first example of the mature Stick Style, it is nationally significant as a seminal work by the noted architect Richard Morris Hunt. It is also nationally significant as the home, since 1916, of the Art Association of Newport, now called the Newport Art Museum and Art Association, one of the oldest continuously operating art associations in the country.

John Noble Alsop Griswold

China trade and railroad magnate John Noble Alsop Griswold resided in Newport for nearly a half century, where he became "closely identified with everything which pertained to the city's enhancement." Griswold was an extremely wealthy man by the time he moved to Newport in 1863. He used his influence to encourage land development and local businesses such as the Newport & Wickford Steamboat & Railroad Company, and the Newport Casino (NHL, 1987). In addition to his large house on Bellevue Avenue, Griswold owned Commercial and Scotts wharves, the Berkeley Block, and large holdings on Coggeshall and Bellevue Avenues and Price's Neck. At the time of his death in 1909, his estate was worth over three million dollars.

J.N.A. Griswold began his successful business career as an importer in his father's China Trade house in New York. He traveled to the Far East in 1847 and was within a year appointed United States consul at Shanghai. He held that position until 1854. Upon his return to America, he helped develop several prominent railroads, serving as president of the Illinois Central Railroad Company and chairman of the board of directors of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company.

Griswold was also involved in the house of Charles H. Russell & Co. "one of the world's foremost business houses of that time." It may have been through the owner of that merchant and shipping company that the Griswolds met Richard Morris Hunt. In the summer of 1860, Hunt was introduced to his wife, Mrs. Russell's sister, at "Oaklawn" the Newport house where Charles H. Russell was born and spent his summers.[6]

John N. A. Griswold and Jane Louise Emmett were married on February 29, 1859 at St. Mark's Church in New York. They moved to an apartment on the Avenue Gabrielle in Paris where their first child was born in the summer of 1861. Soon after the birth, they hosted their "old friend" Richard Morris Hunt and his new wife who were honeymooning in Paris. During their visit, the Griswolds "concluded arrangements with Hunt for the design and construction" of a house for them in Newport, where Mrs. Griswold's brother Thomas Addis Emmett was spending the summer.[7]

"Being an intense Union man," J.N.A. Griswold returned to the United States in November of 1862 after the Civil War broke out to help finance volunteer troops in New York. He purchased two lots on Bellevue Avenue in Newport that month, and leased Kingscote while his new house

[6]Mrs. John N. A. Griswold, "Copy Book," excerpts in the records of the Newport Art Museum.
[7]Ibid.

was constructed under the supervision of Richard Morris Hunt. Thereafter, the Griswolds maintained addresses in both Newport and New York and joined many social clubs at both locations where Mrs. Griswold was known for her entertaining.

The Griswolds divorced after 1890. In addition, their only son George (christened Addis McEvers), a lawyer and graduate of Harvard and Oxford Universities, apparently committed suicide at Christmas time in 1902.[8] The Griswold daughters, Florence and Minnie, both married. Minnie married John Murray Forbes of New York and produced three children, while Florence married Lieutenant Colonel Surgeon H.R.Odo Cross of the British Army.

Mr. John N. A. Griswold died September 13, 1909 at the house on Bellevue Avenue. His wife, Jane Louise Emmett Griswold, had died several months earlier, and the house remained vacant until it was purchased in 1915 by the Art Association of Newport.

Richard Morris Hunt

A highly esteemed individual and respected architect, Richard Morris Hunt was considered by his contemporaries the dean of American architecture. The international awards and honors bestowed upon him exceeded those he received in the United States, confirming Hunt as an architect of international stature. The general acclaim he received both during his lifetime and upon his death is attributed to his training of younger architects through his studio, his contribution of the infusion of professionalism into the practice of architecture and his skill and talent as an architect. During his career, he marked many firsts including the first American trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, the first architect to receive the degree of LL. D. from Harvard University, and the first American to receive the Victoria gold medal bestowed by the Royal Institute of British Architects. Paul R. Baker, Hunt's biographer, claims that Hunt was "one of the most highly acclaimed of all nineteenth-century Americans."[9]

Born on October 31, 1827 to a prominent family in Brattleboro, Vermont, Richard Morris Hunt spent some time in Washington, D.C. while his father Jonathan Hunt was a congressman. The fourth of five children, Richard Morris Hunt was from an artistic family that included his older brother the celebrated painter William Morris Hunt and Hunt's mother and sister, both talented painters. After Hunt's father, a wealthy lawyer, banker and landowner, died in 1832 the family moved to New Haven and later to Boston. In 1843, after Hunt graduated from the Boston Latin School, his mother, Jane Maria Leavitt Hunt, took the family on a trip to Europe, where they decided to stay. While attending boarding school in Geneva, Hunt took architectural drawing lessons from Samuel Darier, who it seems had a great influence on the course of Hunt's future. Rather than attend military academy as formerly planned, in 1845 Hunt settled in Paris where he was accepted into the atelier of Hector Martin Lefuel (a former colleague of Darier's), and the following year Hunt was accepted at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. While continuing his studies for nine years, Hunt traveled extensively. When Lefuel was appointed to the position of architect of the Louvre charged with linking the Louvre and the Tuileries, he invited Hunt to join him in 1854 as an inspector of construction. Hunt's duties involved making studies and full-size drawings under Lefuel for the Pavillon de la Bibliotheque. The following year, Hunt returned to

[8] Unidentified Newspaper clipping, Dec. 27, 1902, Griswold Family File. Newport Art Museum.

[9] Paul R. Baker, "Richard Morris Hunt: An Introduction," in *The Architecture of Richard Morris Hunt*, ed. Susan R. Stein, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 3.

the United States, and for six months worked under Thomas U. Walter on completion of the Capitol in Washington, D. C. Settling in New York in 1856 or 1857, Hunt opened a studio where he introduced the Ecole's rigorous system of training to American students, several of whom became prominent architects in their own right. Among Hunt's pupils were Henry Van Brunt, William R. Ware, George B. Post and Frank Furness.

Hunt enjoyed a popular and prolific career, designing urban and suburban buildings, commercial, residential, institutional and public structures as well as numerous monuments. His palatial Newport cottages are well known, as are many of his New York residences. Several of his buildings have received accolades, among these are the Stuyvesant Apartments, America's first fashionable apartment house, the Lenox Library, the Tribune Building, the W. K. Vanderbilt Mansion, and the entrance wing for the Metropolitan Museum of Art (all in New York); Biltmore in Asheville, N. C., and the base and pedestal of the Statue of Liberty. The Griswold House must be included on any list of Hunt's buildings and is generally acknowledged as one of Hunt's most significant. It is unfortunate that much of his work, including some of his most important buildings, has been demolished.

There is some sense that Hunt's architecture was underappreciated at least in the United States. Hunt seems to have been eclipsed by his contemporary H. H. Richardson, described as a man of "original genius" and of the two "the more exciting figure." Hunt's contribution to American architecture, perhaps undervalued, may have simply been different. Rather than develop an egocentric following or school, Hunt advanced the profession of architecture as a whole and encouraged through classical training the individual development of his architectural students. According to William Francklyn Paris, Hunt's talent was his "scholarly understanding of his profession and taste in adapting the principles he so thoroughly understood to existing problems." In comparison to Richardson, Paris continued, ". . . it is quite possible Hunt was the greater force not only for good taste but also for artistic freedom."[10]

Among his achievements Richard Morris Hunt was an important force in promoting professionalism in the practice of architecture. As a spokesman and advocate, Hunt worked to advance professional standards among architects and to promote a professional relationship between architects and their clients. He was also instrumental in formalizing the system of architectural education. As stated by William Francklyn Paris: "Hunt . . . lifted architecture to its rightful position as an art in America and its practitioners to their rightful status as professional men."[11] Hunt was one of the founders of the American Institute of Architects in 1857 and its first secretary. Paris claimed that "No one worked more actively for the development of the Institute than Hunt."[12] Elected the third president of the A.I.A., Hunt held the position from 1888 through 1891. As a spokesman for architects, his interests included promoting a formalized architectural education, which included the study of the great work of the past, and improving the quality of federal buildings. During his career, Hunt served in the United States and abroad as a juror for architectural exhibits in numerous expositions. Perhaps his most renowned role was as chairman of the board of architects for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago for which he designed the Administration Building. As the gateway to the grounds, it was described as a "monumental, neoclassical edifice whose gleaming gold and white

[10]William Francklyn Paris, "Richard Morris Hunt, First Secretary and Third President of the Institute," *Journal of the AIA* 25 (January 1956) Part II, p. 18.
[11]Paris, "Hunt," *Journal of the AIA* 24 (Dec. 1955) Part I, p. 246.
[12]Paris, "Hunt," Part II, p. 16.

dome was visible all over the grounds," and although it was a temporary structure, it is said to have been his best-known work during his lifetime.[13]

In addition to the many awards received during his lifetime, following his death a memorial was erected in honor of Richard Morris Hunt on Fifth Avenue in New York in 1898. Sponsored by the city's art societies, it was designed by sculptor Daniel Chester French and architect Bruce Price.

Richard Morris Hunt died on July 31, 1895 at his summer home in Newport.

John N. A. Griswold House and Landscape

The John N. A. Griswold House represents an early example of Richard Morris Hunt's work in the United States, it is his first major commission in Newport where a large number of his designs were built, and it has been called the prototype for the mature Stick Style. Historically, the house has had two owners both requiring two distinct uses. Originally built in 1863-64 by China trade and railroad magnate John N. A. Griswold, the house served as his residence for 45 years. Still owned by the heirs, it was vacant for six years before it was acquired by the Art Association of Newport for its headquarters, gallery and studio space. Founded in 1912, the Art Association is one of the oldest continuously operating art associations in the country and has remained at this site to the present. The Griswold House is important for its role in the development of American domestic architecture and as the home of an important institution, the Art Association of Newport.

Richard Morris Hunt and his wife Catharine had been friends with John N. A. Griswold and his wife Jane prior to the Hunt's marriage in the spring of 1861 (discussed later). While the Hunts stayed with the Griswolds in Paris for two weeks in July of 1861, it had been agreed that Hunt would design a house for the Griswolds in Newport. The Hunts and the Griswolds returned from Europe in the fall of 1862. On November 25, 1862, J. N. A. Griswold purchased from Rowland R. Hazard, Jr. and Margaret E. Hazard of Newport, the lot of land bounded to the north by Beach Street, to the east by State Street (now Liberty Street), to the south by Downing Street and to the West by South Touro Street (now Bellevue Avenue), which are the same boundaries of the site occupied by the house today. The deed refers to the lot as the "Fry Estate and Shaw Estate" and to houses on the lot.

By March 1863, plans for construction of the present house were reported in the *Newport Mercury* noting J. N. A. Griswold as one of seven gentlemen who were building or about to build residences on the hill. In October of that year, another mention in the *Newport Mercury* suggested that construction had begun on the building. It included a description of the location of the house toward the center of the Fry lot. The dimensions of the house were 101 feet in length by 60 feet in depth. The location of the present house was apparently not on the footprint of the previous houses since according to the report, "the houses now at the south and east will be moved off in a few weeks."[14]

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[13]Paul R. Baker, "Richard Morris Hunt," in *MacMillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, ed. Adolf K. Placzek, (London: The Free Press, 1982) p. 442.

[14]*Newport Mercury*, Oct. 10, 1863, Newport Historical Society Scrapbook.

No documentation has been found to indicate how the final design for the Griswold House was selected. During the summer of 1863, Richard Morris Hunt and his wife rented a house in Newport, which was located nearby the Griswold lot, on Bellevue Avenue. Hunt therefore could easily supervise the project during construction.

Reported to cost $30,000 when it was finished, the house was built by the local firm of Cranston and Burdick. By the time the house was completed in 1864, the name of the street had been changed to Bellevue Avenue, most likely a reflection of the residential development that was occurring in the area.

The Griswolds were living nearby at Kingscote (NHL, 1966) while their house was being constructed.[15] Upon completion, the Bellevue Avenue home became the Griswold's primary residence where Mr. Griswold remained for the rest of his life.

Observations on the Griswold House in the year it was completed suggest that the style was unfamiliar and perhaps a bit curious, yet at the same time it was well received: "J. N. A. Griswold has built one of the best houses in the city on the corner of Bellevue Avenue and Beach Street. It is two stories high, Gothic, with slate roof, as is also the carriage house and stables. The style is quite peculiar but attractive."[16]

Some of the later houses, most likely by Hunt and his contemporaries, were descriptively referred to by a local society reporter as based on the Swiss style. "The new villas are very costly and elegant seaside residences. They are constructed after the Swiss style and are very showy. One could easily imagine himself in a Swiss village, so rapidly have houses of this description sprung up on the Avenue."[17] Although local critics' comments may seem a bit ambiguous, perhaps the clearest evidence of the appreciation for Hunt's design of the Griswold House were the many subsequent houses built through the 1870s in the same style.

An opinion on the architectural style and an impression of the interior spaces of these houses is offered by a local society columnist, Mrs. Theophilus Pitman, under the pen name of Margery Deane in her column "Letter from Newport." "The new cottages built within half a dozen years are of an entirely different style of architecture and built mostly after designs of R. M. Hunt of New York. They are very novel and attractive, as well as peculiar. I have no time in this letter to make mention of these, many of which are the most costly of the places here, but will do so in my next. In the houses built recently, very few, if any, carpets are used. The floors are laid with hardwoods of different kinds, and highly polished. Bright rugs are placed before the doors and sofas, and the effect is very rich and at the same time very appropriate for summer residence. Walls are hung with chintz in many cases, and no money is spared to make these houses complete and elegant in their appointments."[18]

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[15]The sale of Kingscote on April 29, 1863 was subject to a lease to John N. A. Griswold, which expired May 1, 1864, when it is assumed that the Griswolds expected to move into their new home. (HABS RI-322)

[16]*Providence Daily Journal*, Dec. 3, 1864, p.1.

[17]Margery Deane, cover of the *Evening Post*, May 19, 1870, "Margery Deane Scrapbook, " unpublished, Newport Historical Society.

[18]Margery Deane, "Letter from Newport," *American Society*, May 2, 1871. Writing under the name of Margery Deane, M. Jennie Pitman was the wife of Mr. Theophilus T. Pitman, one of the publishers of the *Newport Daily News* and the daughter of Rev. L. D. Davis an editor at the *News*. Margery Dean was also a correspondent of the *Boston Traveler,* the *New York Evening Post* and *American Society*, a popular society Journal published in New York.

Ms. Deane's description of the exterior of these houses in her next "Letter" articulates the vocabulary Hunt developed at the Griswold House. "Everything in the Swiss style is the fashion this year, and the new houses are made more striking and novel in their construction than any built heretofore. The number of peaks, gables, towers and dormer windows which are tacked on to one roof is really surprising. Where slate is not used the shingles are painted in stripes, usually bright red and brown, and the window frames and caps and the cross pieces or braces with which the whole of the exterior is checkered off, are painted in decided contrast with the rest of the building. Not infrequently red, brown, gray, black and yellow is seen on the same building and a very light pale green is also fashionable. Some very fine rustic fences are to be built on the Avenue, and some very fancy ones after the Swiss style also."[19]

In the March 14, 1871, edition of *American Society*, Margery Deane, commented that Mr. Griswold's "own residence on the Park is one of the finest here." Completed almost seven years earlier, the Griswold House remained among the most notable houses in Newport.

Hunt himself designed several houses in what would later be called the Stick Style by the architectural historian Vincent Scully. The popularity of the style seems to have attracted a number of interested clients. Among those attributed to Hunt were houses in Newport for Mrs. Coleford Jones (1866-67), the expansion of the Hitchcock-Travers House (1862; 1869-71), the Thomas G. Appleton House (1870-71), and the Charlotte Cushman House (1871-72).[20] The influence on other architects is evidenced by the fact that several of Hunt's contemporaries adopted this style to design notable houses. An immediate successor to the Griswold House, Greenvale Farm in Portsmouth by John Hubbard Sturgis was, according to David Chase, stylistically related. A slightly later example by Peabody & Stearns is the Nathan Matthews House, Newport, (1871-1872). Vincent Scully points to the Sturtevant House, Middletown, RI (1875-76), by Dudley Newton, which Scully states, "represents the apogee of the movement: a highly articulated plan, deep porches, high, jagged, movemented silhouette, full of 'masculine' activity, the surface exploded into a basketry of sticks."[21]

Many of Hunt's larger and more impressive buildings have been acknowledged for their individual architectural expression. However discussion of Hunt's work at the time of his death in 1895 acknowledged the importance of the Griswold House in the development of vernacular domestic architecture. The popularity of the stick style in the 1870s, and the Griswold House as the first example of the mature phase of that style, was evident in 1895. Architectural historian and critic Montgomery Schuyler was rather critical of the design of the Griswold House as a whole, but at the same time he recognized its status as the first in what became a popular form. "The first of Mr. Hunt's Newport houses is an object, it may fairly be said, of historical interest, for it was the precursor of a long series which for at least twenty years, and until the cottage had expanded itself successively into a villa and a palace, continued to give its architectural character

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[19]Deane, special cover of the *Evening Mail*, May 4, 1871, Deane Scrapbook, p. 42.

[20]Sarah Bradford Landau, "Richard Morris Hunt, the Continental Picturesque, and the 'Stick Style'" *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 42 (1983): 281-285.

[21]Vincent J. Scully, Jr., *American Architecture and Urbanism*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), p. 91.

to our most famous watering place."[22] It is also important in light of the fact that most of Hunt's other early Newport houses have been demolished.

In an article published in December 1895, Barr Ferree recognized that Hunt's work was not a "complete transference of the French system and its forms" and Ferree pointed to the early work as his most individual. "His very earliest work shows this freedom from academic traditions that did so much to make his art distinctive and personal.. . . Hunt's later work shows more strongly the influence of his Parisian training than his earlier."[23] This perspective corresponds with Vincent Scully's comment that the Griswold House may have been Hunt's most American work.

Architectural Significance of the Griswold House

Numerous architectural historians have acknowledged the architectural significance of the Griswold House. Although there is some disagreement regarding the direct influences for the design and whether it represents a truly American architecture or an American expression of the European vernacular revival, it seems the building's architectural significance lies in the pivotal role it played in the development of a style of American architecture called the Stick Style by Vincent Scully. In addition, it is significant for what it represents among Hunt's own architectural oeuvre, perhaps Hunt's most American work.

In their assessment of the Griswold House, architectural historians have generally agreed that the Griswold House holds a significant place in the evolution of American domestic architecture. This was largely due to the fact that the Griswold House represents a particularly individual or more American expression than Hunt's other work. Perhaps the first to make this point was Montgomery Schuyler, who noted that two earlier designs, The Rossiter House (1855-57) and the Studio Building (1857-58), both built in New York, were, as expected, products of the Beaux Arts. In contrast, at the Griswold House Hunt developed a particularly original design or as Schuyler put it, Hunt was "thrown . .. upon his own resources." Schulyer reasoned that this was due to the use of wood frame and clapboard construction, an exterior sheathing that was not part of the training at the Ecole. Although critical of the overall design of the Griswold House, Schuyler did compliment the details and particularly liked the carriage porch, which he called a "spirited and admirable piece of design."[24]

Unlike Schuyler, Antoinette Downing and Vincent Scully admired the Griswold House and explained how it differed from Hunt's later buildings. "Less turgid than his later work, the Griswold house is also Hunt's most American creation. In its sense of open interior space expanded by piazzas, it looks forward to the spatial achievements of the cottage of the eighties, while in the skeletal explosion of its sticks it sets the stage for a similar development in the cottages of the late sixties and early seventies."[25] It was Vincent Scully who brought attention to the Griswold House using it to illustrate what he named the "Stick Style." Downing and

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[22]Montgomery Schuyler, "The Works of the Late Richard M. Hunt," *Architectural Record* 5 (Oct.-Dec. 1895): 99.

[23]Barr Ferree, "Richard Morris Hunt: His Art and Work," *Architecture and Building* 23 (2 Dec. 1895):

[24]Montgomery Schuyler, "The Works of the Late Richard M. Hunt," *Architectural Record* 5 (Oct.-Dec. 1895): 101.

[25]Antoinette Downing and Vincent J. Scully, Jr., *The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, 1640-1915*. (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, second edition, 1967), pp. 133-134.

Scully went further, singling out the Griswold House. "If the Griswold house is an early example of this apotheosis of skeletal expression, it is also an excellent building in its own right and is perhaps Hunt's best."[26] Barr Ferree, writing in 1895, also believed, although he did not mention the Griswold House by name, that Hunt's early work was his most distinctive.

Scully was perhaps impressed by Hunt's own opinion of his early projects, among which would be included the Griswold House. "By the sixties a feeling for mediaeval half-timber work, already implied in the feeling for wood and Gothic of Downing and Wheeler, produced such a building as the J. N. A. Griswold House in Newport, R.I., built in 1862 by Richard Morris Hunt. This is one of the best of the stick style houses which Hunt built in America after his return from the Beaux-Arts in the fifties. Later, as a 'Vanderbilt architect' of the early nineties, Hunt was to profess a nostalgic admiration for these earlier and less pretentious houses and to wish that they might not be forgotten."[27]

Antoinette Downing and Vincent Scully concurred with Hunt. It was their contention that in his early domestic designs Hunt, "embarked upon a series of wooden buildings which we today may well feel to have been his best work. He himself, late in life, claimed to prefer them to his later palazzi."[28]

The noted architectural historian, Sarah Bradford Landau recognized the regional influence of the Griswold House, which she claimed ". . . encouraged the building of picturesque suburban and resort houses in Newport and elsewhere in the northeast for the next fifteen years or so."[29] While the Griswold House may have been the precursor to other American examples of this style, Hunt did not always follow his own lead. Although he did design other stick style houses very much reminiscent of the Griswold, some of Hunt's later houses, such as the Jones Chalet (1866-67), are more directly evocative of the Swiss chalet than the Griswold House.

The influence of the Griswold House on both clients and other architects was pointed out again by David Chase. While Chase was clear that the Griswold House "brought a new level of sophistication to Newport architecture," he was less clear about its direct descendants. "If not the direct progenitor of the 'modern Gothic' style which flourished so creatively in Newport in the late 1860s and early 1870s, the Griswold project certainly showed the way to prospective clients and architects alike; it illustrated the suitability of the updated and creatively interpreted vernacular late Gothic to the practical, symbolic, and aesthetic desiderata of country-house design."[30]

In addition to picturesque, architect-designed houses appearing around Newport and the Northeast, there was a vernacular movement that embraced the stick style. Having identified the Griswold House as the first example of the developed Stick Style, Vincent Scully also discussed

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[26]Ibid., p. 133.

[27]Vincent J. Scully, Jr. "Romantic Rationalism and the Expression of Structure in Wood: Downing, Wheeler, Gardner and the 'Stick Style, 1840-1876," *Art Bulletin*, 35, (Mar 1953, No. 1): p. 139.

[28]Downing and Scully, *Architectural Heritage of Newport*, p. 133.

[29]Sarah Bradford Landau, "Richard Morris Hunt: Architectural Innovator and Father of a 'Distinctive' American School" in *The Architecture of Richard Morris Hunt*, ed. Susan R. Stein, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p. 52.

[30]David Chase, "Richard Morris Hunt (1827 - 1895), J. N. A. Griswold House and Stable" in *Buildings on Paper, Rhode Island Architectural Drawings, 1825 -1945*, William H. Jordy and Christopher P. Monkhouse, (Providence, RI: Brown University, 1982), p. 88.

the predominance of the style among vernacular buildings. "By the early seventies, however, this reaction toward the heavy and the sculptural had in general run its course, and the stick style emerged before 1876 as the main carrier of the American vernacular in wood."[31] In comparison to examples outside the United States, Scully considered the American expression of this style the most predominant. "The Stick Style was to be found to some extent all over the world, from Istanbul to Buenos Aires, but its importance, again largely because of its comparatively large volume in contrast to pre-existing work, was apparently greater in the United States."[32]

Others have made similar observations about the Stick Style and the Griswold House in particular implying that its influence was not limited to architect-designed houses built in one of the country's most exclusive resorts. In the context of the Griswold House as the first example of the mature stick style, it was the vernacular expression of this form and its national popularity that make Hunt's design of the Griswold House significant. Schuyler recognized the influence Hunt's early buildings (referring specifically to the Griswold House and Travers Block) had on domestic architecture: ". . . they were not without considerable results in their day in bringing about a more intelligent and artistic treatment of the vernacular construction in country houses than would otherwise have been obtained."[33] In a similar vein, Henry Russell Hitchcock said the Stick Style was not an "architect's mode." He called the Stick Style a "popular attempt, remarkably successful for a few years, to create an American domestic vernacular, suited to the materials in general use and to the current methods of building."[34]

Discussion of the sources for the Griswold House generally point to European examples of "rustic" architecture, in particular French pavilions built in the Bois de Boulogne but also to the Swiss chalet as well as English and German picturesque architecture, particularly the half-timber country houses published in pattern books. Vincent Scully also saw the design as part of the evolution of basic American wooden framing technique. According to Downing and Scully the Griswold House not only represented a step in the evolution of certain American forms, but set the standard for domestic architecture for the next decade. "It marks the beginning of that last phase of total skeletal articulation which was to displace the sculptural mansard and to dominate wooden domestic building in the early seventies."[35]

Although predecessors to the Griswold House in the fifties were consciously based on the Swiss cottage or Swiss chalet, Scully differentiated the Griswold House from rustic houses of the previous decade in places such as the Bois de Boulogne and elsewhere because although it evoked mediaeval half-timber, ". . . it can nevertheless be seen that the house has by no means a mediaeval look. It is not dominated by a desire for antiquarian correctness, but is instead a creative amalgamation of picturesque intentions and the use of the wooden frame, enhanced by a feeling for the hard rather than for the fuzzy line, like the hard line engravings of the Pattern Books themselves. Like Wheeler, Hunt is here 'essentially real,' and the multiplication of expressed posts, plates, and diagonal braces continues the dominant skeletal logic of the developing stick style. Here the skeleton becomes a total basketry of sticks, and the house is a

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[31]Scully, "Romantic Rationalism," p. 138.

[32]Vincent J. Scully, Jr., *American Architecture and Urbanism*, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), p. 91.

[33]Schuyler, "Works of Hunt," p. 101.

[34]Henry Russell Hitchcock, *Architecture: Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, Ltd. 1958), p. 264.

[35]Downing and Scully, *Architectural Heritage of Newport*, p. 133.

woven fabric, penetrated by the veranda voids of space which the structural members themselves define."[36]

Sarah Bradford Landau again seemed to agree with Scully. "Conceived before the war, Richard Morris Hunt's Griswold house (ca. 1861-1863) in Newport is the most prominent bellwether even though it had its American, and specifically, its Newport precedents."[37] But in some respects Landau differed with Scully. Landau identified several European precedents, which she saw as the primary influence on Hunt's design. She did not accept Scully's premise that Hunt's design also derived from the exterior articulation of framing elements that was appearing in American vernacular buildings and which Scully related to the ultimate adoption of the balloon frame. Landau offered evidence (referring to Robert Jensen) that Hunt's applied half timber was in no way related to the framing underneath. Landau also rejected Scully's reference to French Gothic Revival rationalism from sources such as Viollet-le-Duc as an inspiration for the Griswold House. It was her contention that through its European inspired design, the Griswold House was responsible for bringing Continental and specifically French rustic architecture to the attention of American architects, more specifically, "As the chief American practitioner of the European vernacular revival, he set an example that was followed by such architects as the French-trained Robert Swain Peabody and the Newport firm of George Champlin Mason."[38]

In general, however, Landau was in accord with Scully when she suggested that Hunt had begun a particularly American genre. "Somewhere along the way, the concept of Hunt as the father 'more than anyone else' of a school of American architecture, as A. J. Bloor expressed it, has been forgotten. It was buried by the Richardsonians in the 1880s as well as by Hunt himself, who abandoned the innovative and sometime gawky designs of his early career for the grander work and the mansions that characterized his late career."[39]

Landau even pressed this point further than Scully suggesting that the Griswold House was a catalyst that presaged later phases in the evolution of American architecture. "Bloor rightly credits Hunt with having stimulated a new development in American domestic architecture, a development that would culminate in the vernacular expression known as the Colonial Revival."[40]

The claims about the Griswold House set out by Downing and Scully have achieved wide acceptance. Among those who have endorsed their theory is Paul Baker, who described the Griswold House as "a picturesque, seemingly sprawling structure" which "initiated Hunt's vernacular, stick-style mode of expression."[41] Baker also reiterated Downing and Scully's position. "With its suggestion of half-timbering and the overhang of the upper stories, the Griswold house faintly echoes medieval construction. More relevant as antecedents, however, as Downing and Scully point out, were the self-conscious rustic designs being built in France in the early 1850s and the vernacular American wood-frame buildings in which, by the early 1860s, the

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[36]Scully, "Romantic Rationalism," p. 139.

[37]Sarah Bradford Landau, "Richard Morris Hunt, the Continental Picturesque, and the 'Stick Style'" *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 42 (1983): 273.

[38]Landau, "Architectural Innovator," p. 52.

[39]Ibid., p. 49.

[40]Ibid., p. 52.

[41]Paul R. Baker, "Richard Morris Hunt," in *MacMillan Encyclopedia of Architects*, ed. Adolf K. Placzek, (London: The Free Press, 1982) p.438.

visual skeleton was increasingly expressed, with posts, plates, and diagonal braces emphasized. The Griswold house is thus an important example in the development of the American stick style, which reached a high point by the early 1870s."[42]

As a result of this acceptance, the building has been used as the classic illustration of the stick style in a number of style books and architectural history texts. Among the list are the following:

> John J.-G. Blumenson, *Identifying American Architecture, A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms, 1600-1945*, Nashville, TN: American Association for State and Local History, 1977, p. 54.
>
> John C. Poppeliers, S. Allen Chambers, Jr., Nancy B. Schwartz, *What Style is it? A Guide to American Architecture*, HABS, NPS, Washington, D.C. The Preservation Press, 1983, p. 56.
>
> Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to American Architecture*, New York: New American Library, 1980. p. 75.
>
> Leland M. Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture*, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1979. p. 154-155.
>
> Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780, A Guide to the Styles*, Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T Press, 1969. p. 112.

Although it is the exterior features that are most strongly associated with the stick style, the plan of the Griswold House also has been identified as an important model in later developments. The plan is decidedly informal and encourages a flow between spaces that is enhanced by multiple large doorways that allow some rooms to open into several adjacent spaces. Descriptions of the interior have common themes of an open plan and flexible living spaces. The main stair hall functions as the circulation core leading to all of the primary rooms and yet there is also secondary circulation between rooms and with the veranda on the first floor offering a surprising variety of options for movement. According to Landau, the plan is quite logical. "Its plan, which is symmetrical except for the service portion at one end, is noteworthy in several respects: the grand staircase is open to the third floor and occupies an unorthodox position over the entrance hall, and the principal rooms seem to relate centrifugally to the core space of the house--the octagonal central reception hall. This plan, which bears a resemblance to certain early 19th-century English villa plans of the Picturesque variety, foreshadows several of Hunt's later houses and already contains elements of the open planning Scully assigns to the Shingle Style."[43]

Scully mentioned that variety is also offered by the play of light and shadow, providing contrasts of the deeply shaded library surrounded by the expansive roof of the veranda, adjacent to the sun drenched alcove, which has a direct southern exposure. Texture and visual interest are further enhanced by the sometimes elaborate interior details found in features such as the stair banisters, the inlaid floors and the wooden moldings of the library, dining room and several fireplace mantels. Downing and Scully's positive reaction to the interior seems to echo the enthusiasm of the contemporaries who commented on the house when it was first built. "Enough of the original plan remains, however, to give an idea of its character, which is both articulated and open, flexible and ordered. One enters on the north under a stick-work porte-cochere, mounts a few steps, and stands in a central octagonal hall, the circulation core of the house. The stairs mount

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[42]Paul R. Baker, *Richard Morris Hunt*, (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1980), p. 135.
[43]Landau, "Continental Picturesque," p. 276-277.

again to a large landing over the porte-cochere, which has a high and structurally expressive ceiling. From the octagonal hall a reception room and a study open left and right, while straight ahead, on a cross axis to the south, are the living and dining rooms. The room shapes take on vitality as they interlock with the central polygon, and through the wide door openings, movement in the high-ceilinged interior space is rhythmical and varied. The light also is varied--muted in the hall, darker in the high landing, and brighter in the dining room, between which and the shadowed living room spills a bright pool of light from the central bay on the south. Glass doors open from the living room to the surrounding piazza, where diagonal stick-work casts a further pattern of shadows."[44]

While there are differing points of view on the sources for the Griswold House there is general agreement about its significance. Sarah Bradford Landau has described the enigma the Griswold House presents even to the present. "Today, as in 1895, the preeminence of the Tribune Building, the Stuyvesant Apartments, and the Griswold house in the context of their specific genres is acknowledged if not fully understood."[45] Most importantly, the recognition of the Griswold House will help to ensure that it is not overshadowed by Hunt's numerous accomplishments and impressive body of work.

The Second Phase: Home to the Art Association of Newport

On November 11, 1915, Frederick Frelinghuysen and George G. Frelinghuysen, executors of the Last Will and Testament of John N. A. Griswold, sold the property to the Art Association of Newport, for $40,000.00.[46] William Paine Sheffield, acting on behalf of the Art Association, made the commitment to purchase the property with the understanding that the Association must raise forty thousand dollars before Dec. 18th. He was enthusiastic about the implications for the Art Association: "I cannot forbear congratulating you, and thro' you, the Art Association, on the great future which opens before it, by securing this unique and centrally located site for the home of its activities. It thus furnishes the means, when adequately improved, for the Association to be of still greater benefit and a continuing inspiration to the education of the youth of this city, and it ensures a far reaching development in Art for the entire community."[47]

Following a special meeting of the Art Association on Dec. 16, 1915, to ratify the purchase of the Griswold Estate, the *Newport Herald* reported that work would be required on the house to adapt it to its new use. "It will be needful to make some improvements about the place at once so that pictures may be hung in the most advantageous way. There is desired a flood of northern light and plans will be devised and carried out to get this into the building. Moreover, it is evident that under the present construction shadows would be cast upon the pictures and the cause of this must be removed."[48]

The Art Association moved into the Griswold House on March 18, 1916, the date the lease expired on their former quarters on Church Street. To suit its needs for adequate light and classroom space, the Association continued work on the house during most of that year. The use of the space has not changed significantly since the Art Association first took up residence. The

[44]Downing and Scully, *Architectural Heritage of Newport*, p. 134.
[45]Landau, "Architectural Innovator," p. 49.
[46]City of Newport, Land Evidence, Book 102, Page 172.
[47]William Paine Sheffield to Mrs. Maud Howe Elliott, Dec. 9, 1915, Newport Art Museum Records.
[48]*Newport Herald*, Dec. 18, 1915, Art Association of Newport Scrapbook.

Drury Gallery, the former dining room, became the Directors' Room and was set up with an office for Maud Howe Elliott. It also was intended to function as a meeting space for lectures so that overflow seating could be provided in the adjoining rooms. The library remained as a library, the Wright Gallery served as a gallery, the center north room, now the Griffon Shop, was the ladies' cloak and retiring rooms and to the east of that were the rooms for the men. The laundry, which had been located at the east end of the corridor leading from the entrance, was transformed into a tea room. Three rooms in the east ell, consisting of the kitchen and two adjoining offices, were consolidated into one gallery and the corridor leading from the entrance to the ell was extended into the gallery. Classrooms and studios were located on the second and third floors. When the building opened, the children's Saturday classes were held in the southwest room of the second floor, the portrait class met in the northwest room, while the north room and the northeast room were used by the Saturday morning class in modeling and for "studies with casts as subjects." In addition, during the 1916 renovations, the floor and floor framing for the stable were replaced and the entire first floor of the stable was converted into three art studios, each 17 x 37 feet.[49]

The reason for the ultimate removal of the third floor in the Portrait Studio (NW room 2nd floor) is explained in a letter from Stone Carpenter and Sheldon, Architects to Marsden J. Perry, Chairman of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds. "Since writing you in regard to the slanting ceiling for the Portrait Class Studio in the Art Association of Newport's building, Mr. Sheldon has devised a way by which the ceiling can be slanted the whole length of the room as you desire. We can accomplish this by putting a small platform one step up above the hall floor in the part of the third story hall that jogs into the room."[50] It appears that rather than raise the floor, it was removed and the infill along the railing was installed to close off the room on the third floor.

Subsequent work at the Art Association property included moving the former stable and attaching it to the east end of the building, in 1920. The kitchen ell, which had been converted to a gallery, and the stable were converted to a new large gallery and meeting hall, which was intended to seat 300 people. One studio was retained or rebuilt at the east end of the stable, and continues in that use today.[51]

Meanwhile, beginning in 1918, it was proposed to build a memorial to Howard Gardiner Cushing, an artist and one of the Art Association's original members who died in his mid forties. William Adams Delano of the New York Architectural firm of Delano & Aldrich designed the Cushing Memorial that was built to the south of the Griswold House within the bounds of the original property. Opened on August 1, 1920, the gallery had been planned by his friends to house a number of Cushing's paintings. The building had been designed to accept an extension at the rear and in 1989-90, the east extension to the Cushing Memorial was built to the designs of Peter Roudebush. The new gallery was named in honor of Mrs. Sara Rives.

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[49] Art Association, "Annual Report," 1917.

[50] Stone Carpenter and Sheldon, Architects to Marsden J. Perry, Sept. 7, 1916, Newport Art Museum Records.

[51] Maud Howe Elliott, *This Was My Newport*, (Cambridge, Mass.,: The Mythology Company, 1944), p. 127; Art Association, "Annual Report" 1921.

Early Art Clubs and Associations

The history of American art organizations is characterized by the constant struggle between the needs of artists and the desires of wealthy patrons. The longevity and success of the Art Associations of Newport (1912), Lyme (1914) and Provincetown (1914) would suggest that the conflict was finally resolved in the early part of the twentieth century, when artist-run organizations with open membership superseded exclusive gentlemen's social clubs as a popular means of organizing groups of individuals interested in art.

Philadelphia artists formed the first institution devoted to art in 1795. The Columbanium, as it was called, was defunct within a year and artists would not play a role in the development of art organizations for nearly a century. Art institutions founded in the early part of the 19th century were run by wealthy laymen who had the business sense required to structure a successful organization and the capital required to purchase buildings and transport casts and old masters to this country from Europe. The American Academy of Fine Arts in New York, the Boston Athenaeum and the Pennsylvania Academy in Philadelphia, for example, were operated like joint-stock companies where affluent subscribers owned shares of the property. This system created a dependency on wealth that alienated the very artists for whom the associations were formed. Nonetheless, any artist seeking advancement in the 1820s was drawn by necessity to these northeastern cities where academies and collections of casts and old masters were located. After developing his artistic talent, the artist would often remain in these urban centers which contained publishing houses, wealthy patrons and literary communities.[52]

Increased public interest in art and respect for the profession resulted in the development of artist-run academies and powerful professional associations in the 1840s. These art associations created by and for artists were also founded in large cities: the Artists and Amateurs Association of Philadelphia (1840), the Boston Artists Association (1842) the New York Gallery of Fine Arts (1844) and the American Art-Union (New York, 1839).[53] In fact, even through the end of the nineteenth century, formal Art Associations were without fail founded in cities such as Brooklyn (1864), San Francisco (1872), Columbus (1879), Indianapolis (1883), Paris (1890) and Chicago (1897). The Central Art Association of America (1894), "a national organization for the promotion of art among the people," had 3000 members by 1897, spreading the opportunity to join a formal association to American artists throughout the country. None of these associations survived the twentieth century.[54] However, the Boston Art Students Association continues to operate today as the Copley Society. Founded in 1879 as an alumni society for the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the group opened its membership to all interested in art in 1891 and changed its name to the Copley Society in 1901. The Society holds an esteemed position in American art history, being the oldest non-profit art association in the country.[55] Interestingly, it was not until 1957 that the Society acquired its first permanent home, where it is located today.

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[52] Neil Harris, *The Artist in American Society: The Formative Years, 1790-1860.*, (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1966), passim.

[53] Ibid., passim.

[54] *Boston Art Guide and Artists' Directory*. Boston: The Wheat Publishing Company, ca. 1895, passim; *The American Art Annual*, 1898, passim.

[55] Trevor J. Fairbrother, *The Bostonians: Painters of an Elegant Age, 1870-1930.* (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1986), p. 41.

The majority of the art clubs that emerged in the mid- to late-nineteenth century were similar to the early art institutions in that they were for the elite who had a special interest in art, and not necessarily for the promotion of local artists. One founding member of the Boston Art Club, for example, explained, "Ours is an *Art* Club, not an Artists."[56] The Boston club received a great deal of contemporary criticism for doing "little for professionals" and for the makeup of its board and members, "nearly all…men of trade—who certainly do not claim to know much about art."[57] The Providence Art Club, founded by sixteen artists in 1880, seems to be an exception. The artist-founders of the Providence club met at the invitation of Charles Walter Stetson and others who had already "banded themselves together for mutual protection, intending to make a united stand against their arch-enemy, the dealer."[58] The heart of the clubhouse in Providence was its gallery where artists could exhibit and sell their work.

To distinguish their more democratic aims from those of an exclusive private social club, the Newport group selected the word "Association" to describe its membership. It encouraged participation by enlisted men, and charged very little for enrollment in its school which offered many scholarships. It also catered to the needs of artists. "We do not want to make money out of our artists; we want rather to help them make money, and with their interest in mind, the rental [of gallery space has] been kept as low as possible."[59]

Mrs. Elliott explained that the invitation to join was--and always had been--open to all.

> Our strength lies in the fact that we are truly a representative association, including people of every age and every sort of income, that we welcome with equal cordiality all sorts and conditions of men, women and children, asking only one thing, that they come to us in the same spirit of devotion to the cultivation of artistic endeavor that inspired our founders.[60]

The Art Association of Newport

Founded in 1912 for "the cultivation of artistic endeavor and interest among the citizens of Newport,"[61] the Art Association of Newport (also commonly referred to as the Newport Art Association) is one of the oldest continuously operating Art Associations in the country. Its founding took place during a transitional period in the history of American art, developing out of the art colony movement and the rise of American Impressionism at the turn of the century, and at the same time introducing innovative New York shows to a New England audience. Although the association has been largely excluded from major histories of American Impressionism and the art colonies with which it was associated, nationally known impressionists painted substantial bodies of work in Newport. Furthermore, native artists of the coastal city who founded the association were well known locally for their *en plein air* paintings, and envisioned themselves as being successors to the many generations of prominent artists who lived, practiced and taught in Newport. These artists organized immediately after first exhibiting together in March of 1912,

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[56] Carol Troyen, *The Boston Tradition: American Paintings from the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.* (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, 1980), p. 25.

[57] Beta, "The Art Clubs of Boston." *Art Amateur.* 11 (Oct 1884), p. 100.

[58] George Leland Miner, *Angell's Lane: The History of a Little Street in Providence.* (Providence, Akermann-Standard Press, 1948), p. 128.

[59] Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1916.

[60] Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1921.

[61] Art Association of Newport, "Council Minutes," June 13, 1912.

two years before their more famous contemporaries in the colonies at Old Lyme, Connecticut and Provincetown, Massachusetts would make an effort to formally unite.

Founded during the summer of 1912, the Newport Art Association was established during a turbulent period in the history of American art, preceding the famously scandalous and influential Armory Show of 1913 by just a few months. The Armory Show was an unprecedented showing of modern European and American art, receiving so much negative press that the entire country was shocked into awareness of the new trend. The 1913 show organized by Arthur B. Davies and a group of independent New York artists called the Association of American Painters and Sculptors (founded 1911) signaled the advent of American Modernism. It traveled to New York and Boston, where it would have been seen first hand by many artists and patrons who summered in Newport. Cora Lee Gibbs has since determined however that many of the nationally-known artists in the 1912 Newport show also exhibited at the Armory Show with the avant-garde European artists that attracted so much press. [62]

The art field was historically dominated by men, and the trend continued in the early part of the twentieth century in Lyme, Provincetown and other art colonies. The Newport Art Association board, on the other hand, included powerful female members who were largely responsible for the administration of the organization, well before the women of this nation were given the right to vote in 1920. The early history of this association and its ultimate success was largely dependent upon the efforts of a few devoted artistic and literary women: Maud Howe Elliott, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, and Helena Sturtevant. This triumvirate of "pre-war titans" defined the character of the association from its inception to today with its many and varied exhibits (particularly its annual exhibit of living artists), its art school, lecture series, etc.[63]

Pulitzer Prize-winner and suffragist, Maud Howe Elliott was by all accounts "the guiding spirit of the founders."[64] Her bulky correspondence and eloquent annual reports both chronicle and characterize the early history of the association. Her book, *This Was My Newport*, written in her ninetieth year, combined with the hundreds of paintings of the buildings and coastline of the city by her friend and colleague Helena Sturtevant, who headed the art school of the association for its first thirty years, evoke the artistic atmosphere of Newport at the turn of the century.

Maud Howe Elliott's lecture "An Artist's Life in Rome" on March 20, 1912 and the exhibition that followed inspired the artistically inclined summer residents of Newport to form the Art Association of Newport. The untitled exhibit that followed Elliott's lecture for the Current Topics Club featured paintings of the Newport coastline by local artists. Twelve of the twenty-one exhibitors became founding board members of the new art association, which held its first meeting that June. The first show sponsored by the fledgling association (discussed below) took place in July.[65] The prominent artists invited to the Newport Art Association's first exhibition in July of 1912 included Mary Cassatt, John White Alexander, Joseph DeCamp, Frank W. Benson, Childe Hassam, J. Alden Weir, Charles Hawthorne, George Bellows, Ernest Lawson and Arthur B. Davies. Impressionism was the prevailing style. DeCamp, Benson, Hassam and Weir were

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[62]Gibbs, *1912 Revisited*, p. 6.

[63]Bruce Howe in Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1962.

[64]Cora Lee Gibbs, *1912 Revisited: The 75th Anniversary Exhibition: Harrison S. Morris Memorial Exhibition.* (Newport, RI: Newport Art Museum and Art Association, 1987).

[65]Bruce Howe, "Early Days of the Art Association," *Newport Historical Society Bulletin*, 110 (April 1963), passim.

among the group of American Impressionists known as "The Ten." Two additional members of The Ten, Willard Metcalf and Edmund Tarbell, showed their work in Newport in 1914. Ernest Lawson and Arthur B. Davies on the other hand regularly exhibited as part of a group of rebellious independent New York artists called "The Eight." Often associated with The Eight, George Bellows also painted realistic images of urban life that won the group the title of the "Ashcan School" or the new American realists. In the Newport show, paintings by Lawson and Bellows were criticized as "robust and over emphatic. . .not as well coordinated and thought out pictorially as might be desired. . . a sensation of incompleteness." [66] Despite the criticism, these New York artists would continue to exhibit regularly in Newport, through the patronage of Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney who joined the board in 1915.

An important outcome of the first exhibit was the sale of eight pictures exhibited. Four additional one-man shows were held the first year, largely through the efforts of the artists themselves who rented the gallery space in order to show and sell their work. With each new show, interest, sales and commissions increased.[67]

Research has shown that Maud Howe and John Elliott and Helena and Louisa Sturtevant were responsible for initially developing a "concrete scheme" for the organization and for recruiting William Sargeant Kendall as its first president. This scheme was formulated at the Sturtevant studio on Second Beach on March 24th, just four days after the impromptu spring exhibit. "Mr. and Mrs. Kendall were approached the following Sunday, March 31, and the next evening the Sturtevants went to New York to interest Mr. Albert Sterner and found him very enthusiastic."[68] The logical choice as leader of the new organization was William Sargeant Kendall who was spending his first summer in Newport, but had an established name, having received numerous prizes in America and abroad. Kendall also would have been aware of the art associations in Brooklyn, New York and Paris, where he studied in the 1880s.[69] By April 12, Kendall distributed a rough draft of a constitution for the association to seven artists: Elijah Baxter, Charles Biesel, Albert Sterner, Leslie P. Thompson as well as Elliott and the Sturtevants. "The plan is to have five or eight artists. . . sign a letter to be sent with this proposal, if possible, to have an exhibition in the end of June or thereabout." Each artist agreed to sign, some with reservations, and the letter immediately attracted 141 members.[70]

The proposed organization promoted "the cultivation of artistic endeavor and interest among the citizens of Newport" by holding at least one "exhibition of pictures" per year. Membership, consisting of artists and associates, was open to any person resident in Newport or its vicinity for some portion of the year. The officers served as the Jury of Selectmen for the exhibit (open to any artist regardless of residence) and were responsible for reviewing artwork to determine who was eligible for "artist membership." The membership fee of $5.00 entitled one to five tickets to a private viewing of the exhibits. Non-members were charged a nominal fee to attend and certain days were free to all.[71]

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[66]Howe, "Early Days," p. 14.

[67]Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1913.

[68]Ibid.

[69]"William Sargeant Kendall," *National Cyclopedia of American Biography*.

[70]Howe, "Early Days," pp. 11-12; Maud Howe Elliott, *This Was My Newport*, (Cambridge, Mass., The Mythology Company, 1944), pp. 125-126.

[71]Art Association of Newport, "Council Minutes," June 13, 1912; Art Association of Newport Scrapbook, 1912.

Five of the eight artist-organizers served on the original board, with Maud Howe Elliott as secretary. Elliott's long association with Newport and nearby Portsmouth was a characteristic shared by most of the early board members. Visitors to her Portsmouth homes included William Morris Hunt, William and Henry James, Col. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Alexander Agassiz and Harrison S. Morris. In her early twenties, Elliott had become the art editor of the *Boston Transcript* and in 1887 she married English artist John Elliott. Between 1903 and 1913 the couple lived in the Cornish, New Hampshire art colony, well known for its musicals and theatricals as well as for being the home of Augustus Saint-Gaudens, Maxfield Parrish, Thomas Wilmer Dewing and Willard Metcalf.[72]

The first meeting of the board "opened with a discussion of the Hunt studio as the future home of the association." These artist-founders were consciously creating associations with the earlier artist colony of William Morris Hunt and his Newport school, for they each owed a great deal to Hunt's method and style of painting. The council voted to rent the Hunt studio for one year with the understanding that the association had the right to renew the lease on the same terms for a five-year period. They discussed how the gallery "could be made of service to the members and to the community," concluding that loan exhibits and one-man shows particularly by members should supplement the annual exhibit. The president expressed his intent to exhibit "pictures by well-known living American artists" in addition to those by members of the association.[73]

In the new charter of 1915, the mission of the Newport Art Association was broadened to foster all arts including literature, music and science, and its educational objectives included the establishment of a museum open to the public. In order to fulfill its mission, the association adopted a rigorous schedule, divided into summer and winter functions. The schedule was well established by 1920 when it was first described in detail by Maud Elliott. "Newport's 'season' has for some years opened with the Reception and Private View of the Annual Exhibition of works of Art by living American artists, held early in July, followed by a series of private or special exhibitions for artists of the present day. Our studios are let for the summer months to artists from different parts of the country who wish to come to Newport to work. When the autumn comes, the opening of the school with daily classes for advanced scholars, Saturday morning classes for junior students and evening classes in Mechanical Drawing. With the New Year our lecture series begins. For four months, from the first of January to the first of April, the members gather together on Saturday afternoons to hear lectures and to enjoy the social hour that follows the address. Once a month a musical afternoon is arranged."[74]

A volunteer board was personally responsible for the various operations until 1975 when the first paid director was hired. The office of president was refilled every two years until Harrison Morris, its third president, came on board in 1916.

Maud Howe Elliott was undoubtedly responsible for recruiting Mr. Morris, a Philadelphia industrialist who had served as the art editor of the *Ladies Home Journal*, managing director of the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts and commission general from the US to the 1910 Art Exposition in Rome. Harrison Morris' optimism and high aspirations carried him through the

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[72]Art Association of Newport Scrapbook, 1948; Elliott, *My Newport,* p. 104; A Circle of Friends, 83-84; Harrison S. Morris, *Confessions in Art*, (New York: Sears Publishing Co., Inc., 1930), p. 270.

[73]Art Association of Newport, "Council Minutes,"June 13, 1912.

[74]"Secretary's Report," Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1920.

next thirty-one years as president. At his death in 1948, just a few months after that of Mrs. Elliott, he was remembered in conjunction with her as "advancing the Art Association to its present position."[75]

Schools promoting painting out of doors were an important development of the turn-of-the-century art colony. The educational objectives of the colonies and Associations are manifest in the schools that characterize them, distinguishing them from the exclusive clubs which catered to their members rather than to the larger community. In Maud Howe Elliott's estimation, "Perhaps no work that the association has accomplished is quite so valuable as that of the school."[76]

The first season of the Newport Art Association School took place in the summer of 1913, just one year after the founding of the organization. Helena Sturtevant who assisted John Elliott as instructor in the first season, would direct the school until her death in 1946. Sturtevant was born in Newport and lived in nearby Middletown most of her life. She had studied at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston under Edmund Tarbell before completing her education in Paris at Colarossi and La Grande Chaumiere. She and her Parisian-trained artist sister Louisa who were instrumental in founding the Art Association in Newport must have been aware of the American Art Association in Paris, founded in 1890 "to afford the members a place of meeting, facilities for the promotion of good fellowship, to preserve American individuality, and the advantages of organized effort."[77] The Newport organization shared a mission similar to the Parisian group and its school operated on "the French [atelier] system."[78]

The old William Morris Hunt studio was transformed from a lecture hall into an atelier for the art school over the winter of 1912-1913. Kendall was to be in charge of the school at its opening, but had become ill. Within a few months, he left Newport permanently to fulfill his new role as the director of the School of Fine Arts at Yale University. John Elliott opened the course on short notice, undoubtedly at the encouragement of his wife.[79]

The school was open every day from 9 a.m. "until as late in the afternoon as the light lasts, or the students wish to stay." The charge in this school, as in Parisian ateliers, "is small and meant to cover the actual expenses of heating, lighting and keeping the studio in order. The teaching is given free by the artists and is their contribution to the school."[80] This approach to teaching apparently differed from that of the art schools of Lyme and Provincetown which were intended to provide a reliable source of income for the artists/art instructors.

Classes were offered for both children and adults, and the first detailed description of the method of instruction appeared 1916. "In the beginning the youngest students draw from blocks and still life objects in charcoal, later the addition of color lends a new interest to their work. A most ingenious means of teaching perspective is in use here, the "Cross" glass slate and pencil, an appliance which has been used with great success by Boston teachers. The next step for the student leads him to another room where he makes drawings in light and shade of the simpler

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[75] *Newport Daily News*, May 13, 1948.
[76] Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1915.
[77] *American Art Annual*
[78] *Newport Daily News*, April 12, 1913; Howe, "Early Days," p. 15; *Newport Daily News*, Nov. 9, 1946; *National Cyclopedia of American Biography*; Records of the School of the Association.
[79] Howe, "Early Days," p.15.
[80] *Newport News*, April 12, 1913, Art Association of Newport Scrapbook.

forms of casts, separate features of the human anatomy, etc. Then he is advanced to the full head and figure following the methods of the best schools of art. If he wishes to take up portraiture, an opportunity is afforded when he has sufficient training in draughtsmanship."[81]

According to this description and that of the first exhibition of student work, still lives and life studies executed in the studio were the dominant genres for the beginning students. Leslie P. Thompson, a founding artist-member and instructor at the private preparatory school Saint George's, formed "a class for out of door sketching under the auspices of the art association" for more advanced students in 1914.[82]

Instruction in anatomy accompanied a clay modeling class. In response to the rising popularity of the Arts and Crafts societies and schools, a class in decorative design was opened in 1916 "to obtain practical and artistic knowledge of ornament and its application of various commercial purposes like fabrics, woven and printed, wall paper, glass, silver, book covers, etc.... Even if the student never uses it professionally, it cannot fail to improve and cultivate his taste and strengthen his judgment regarding the beauty or its lack in the things he has to buy or use or by which he is surrounded in his daily life."[83]

A severe drop in enrollment during World War I resulted in the introduction of new classes directed specifically toward the training of Army and Navy men stationed in Newport. Mechanical drawing classes offered by the "chief draftsman of the Torpedo Station" were held and "on more than one occasion the 'plant' of the Association has been used by the draftsmen employed by the Government to get out drawings for which there was some haste."[84]

While Maud Howe Elliott and Helena Sturtevant have yet to be discovered by art historians studying national trends, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney is recognized as a major figure in the history of American art and its patronage. Whitney, through her exhibitions and purchases in both New York and Newport, encouraged at an early date the work of contemporary American artists who were not welcome in academic venues. Whitney served on the board of the Art Association of Newport for a decade, bringing her influential New York shows to Newport during the summer. The Association shared many common goals with her famous Whitney Studio (NHL, 1992) and its successor the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. While hosting exhibitions and making purchases in Newport, she also provided a substantial portion of the funding for two Newport Art Association facilities: the Griswold House and the Cushing Memorial.

Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney purchased artwork through the Association in 1915. Founder of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Whitney is recognized as being among the first to appreciate the new American realists of the Ashcan School and developed into one of the most forward-looking art patrons of her day. Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney joined the council of the Newport Art Association in 1915, the very year she established the Friends of Young Artists to encourage contemporary art in New York. Whitney served as an artist member of the Art Association board during its formative years between 1915 and 1925, when she was contemporaneously forming what would become the core collection of the Whitney Museum of American Art. Her purchases

[81] *Newport Herald*, Dec. 1916, Art Association of Newport Scrapbook.
[82] *Newport Herald*, July 22, 1914, Art Association of Newport Scrapbook.
[83] *Newport Herald*, December 1916, Art Association of Newport Scrapbook.
[84] "Secretary's Report,"Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1918.

of the works of Young Artists who exhibited in both New York and Newport under her patronage comprised its early collection. Whitney retained contacts with the Association as an Honorary Vice President of the Association, a title she held until her death in 1942.

Both the Newport Art Association and the Friends of Young Artists were at an early date encouraging the work of contemporary American artists through exhibition. Mrs. Whitney's "first sizable public display of her art collection" took the form of a show in her Whitney Studio called Modern Paintings by American and Foreign Artists in January 1916.[85] She brought this landmark show to Newport that summer. Supplementing the exhibit of modern artists was a retrospective of her own sculpture at the Griswold House. "She utilized the whole of the lower story, the hall, staircase and landing, and the grounds as well. The exhibition was of a twofold character, showing Mrs. Whitney as an artist by the full and interesting exhibit of her own sculpture, and as a collector by a large number of paintings from her private collection by artists of distinction, both American and European."[86]

With her secretary, she organized shows in Newport on the painters: Ernest Lawson (1917), Howard Gardiner Cushing (1917), George Bellows (1917), Arthur B. Davies (1917), William Glackens (1917) and Guy Pene du Bois (1920); as well as the sculptors: Paul Manship (1917), Jo Davidson (1917), James E. Fraser (1917), John Gregory (1917) and Andrew O'Connor (1920). Whitney's Newport shows were extremely popular. Maud Howe Elliott reported that the Bellows, Davies, Blackens, Davidson, Framer and Gregory show "aroused greater interest and attracted more visitors than any other in the history of the association. Jo Davidson's statue of La France on the lawn and James E. Fraser's 'End of the Trail' continued to attract a continuous procession of people all day long."[87]

Daughter of the railroad tycoon Cornelius Vanderbilt, Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney had summered in Newport at the Breakers since childhood. In her youth, she befriended the artist and fellow Newporter Howard Gardiner Cushing who would introduce her to his brother-in-law Hendrick Christian Andersen with whom she would take private sculpting lessons.[88] Cushing also introduced Gertrude Whitney to the Newport Art Association. In a letter to Maud Howe Elliott where Cushing agreed to send a group of his pictures to a Newport exhibit, he suggested contacting Mrs. Whitney about "some small pieces of sculpture" for the exhibit as well.[89] Mrs. Whitney's response to Maud Elliott's letter was her first contact with the Association. She loaned four pieces of sculpture.[90] In her second handwritten letter, that December, Mrs. Whitney sent a check for $5000 toward the purchase of the Griswold House, enabling the Newport Art Association to fulfill its long-term goal of acquiring a permanent home.[91]

The association had been preoccupied with locating a home since 1913, when its rented quarters at the William Morris Hunt Studio went up for sale, a sale which would leave the new

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[85]Avis Berman, *Rebels on Eighth Street: Juliana Force and the Whitney Museum of American Art.* (New York: Athenaeum, 1990), pp. 121, 122.

[86]Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1917.

[87]Art Association of Newport, "Report of the Exhibition Committee," Sept. 12, 1917.

[88]Berman, *Rebels,* passim.

[89]Howard Gardiner Cushing to Maud Howe Elliott, June 8 [1915].

[90]Art Association of Newport, Correspondence and Scrapbooks, 1915; Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney to Maud Howe Elliott, Aug. 28, [1915].

[91]Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney to Maud Howe Elliott, Saturday [1915].

association homeless. Soon after an appeal went out to its membership for $5000 to purchase the building, and local newspapers reported that it was "practically assured" that the association would acquire "the old Hunt studio together with cottage and several thousand feet of land adjacent."[92] That scheme was shortly abandoned in favor of a new building intended "to be erected on the lot on Old Beach Road, now occupied by the chapel" but never executed.[93]

In December 1915 Marsden Perry, the owner of Narragansett Electric Lighting Company, obtained a contract for the Griswold house property, making the first payment of $2000 himself directly to the Griswold heirs as his contribution to the building fund. The $5000 check from Gertrude Whitney followed soon afterward. The association moved into its new building in March 1916, holding its first event there in celebration of the Shakespeare Tercentenary probably at the suggestion of Perry, a Shakespeare enthusiast.[94]

Less than two years after the purchase, construction of a new building was again proposed, probably by Gertrude Whitney who received credit for the building upon its completion. There was some debate about the proposal, particularly about how the building would "architecturally harmonize with the plan of buildings which the Association might erect in the future."[95] The board may also have questioned the advisability of erecting a new building when the mortgage on the Griswold House was not yet fully paid. In response to this opposition, donors threatened to retract their gifts. "The self appointed committee to receive funds for the memorial to Howard Cushing has held several meetings, and has also consulted with many of the people who subscribed to this project. It has come to the conclusion, after weighing the matter carefully, that unless the Newport Art Association is willing to receive the gift as originally proposed-namely, in the form of a small detached building which would stand distinctly as a memorial to Howard Cushing - to make some other disposition of the funds outside of Newport."[96] Needless to say, the gift of the Howard Cushing Memorial Building was approved as originally proposed.

In August 1920 the Cushing Memorial with its "ample fireproof gallery properly lighted with skylights" was dedicated and immediately put to use as a place to hold loan exhibitions. Several Cushing works were permanently installed in the outer hall. The very year it was completed, a Committee on Exhibition of Objets d'Art was formed to create a loan exhibition comprised of objects owned by Newport residents. The committee hopefully proposed that "some summer residents might allow their objects to be on view during the winter months for safe keeping."[97]

The construction of the Cushing Memorial signaled a turning point in the history of the art association, for these new fireproof facilities allowed the group to not only accept loans, but also to collect. The goal of collecting objects for exhibition in a public museum expressed in the 1915 charter of the association could finally be realized. By 1923 a separate Art Commission set out to create a collection to form "the nucleus of a Museum of Fine Arts, an aim of the founders since its inception." The collection was first envisioned as "somewhat the same character as the small

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[92]Unidentified newspaper clipping, [February 1914], Art Association of Newport Scrapbook, 1914.
[93]Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1914.
[94]Art Association of Newport, Council Minutes and Scrapbook, 1916.
[95]"Report of the Committee on Buildings and Grounds," Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1918.
[96]Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney to Maud Howe Elliott, Mar 8, 1918.
[97]"Report of the Committee on Exhibition of Objets d'Art," Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1920.

working school museum of the Cooper Union in New York."[98] The students of the Newport Art Association school now had ample accommodations to exhibit their work.

Newport Art Association, 1920-1999

By 1920 the Newport Art Association owned two substantial buildings and had eliminated all debt. After its first bequest in 1921, the association began to consider developing an endowment to cover its operating expenses. The endowment began in the form of a bequest from Samuel F. Pratt, an octogenarian who spent "every pleasant summer day . . . sitting upon the piazza or in the library looking over the books and magazines."[99] Pratt left his property on Bellevue Avenue to the association, which was also named the residuary legatee of his estate. Board members unanimously decided to sell the property, invest the profits and spend only the income on yearly expenses.[100]

A second large bequest arrived in 1928, when Mrs. George Rives left the "Swanhurst" estate with an endowment for its maintenance to the association in memory of her mother Sarah Swan Whiting. The Swanhurst Summer School of Arts, offering courses in music, dancing and the languages was an integral element of the Newport Art Association for sixty years until its sale in 1988.[101]

Higher levels of membership were introduced in 1920 and again in 1923, and an appeal for an endowment fund of $200,000 was issued in 1927. During that decade, the range of rental clientele expanded from exhibiting artists to various other organizations and individuals for lectures, weddings, balls and bridge tournaments.[102]

The 1930s and 1940s were difficult decades for the association which experienced a drop in membership from 860 to 665 in 1934, suffered considerable damage in the hurricane of 1938, and lost three of its founders and most devoted members Helena Sturtevant (1946), Maud Howe Elliott (1948), and Harrison S. Morris (1948).

Throughout administrative changes, continuity was maintained by yet another board member who devoted her life to the well being of the organization, Marion K. Carry. Carry had studied at the school in her youth and became an instructor there under Helena Sturtevant. From the late 1950s until her retirement in 1972, she headed both the school and the exhibition committees, personally teaching hundreds of students in an abstract style with her favorite paper flower props. She continued to teach at least a decade after her retirement from her administrative duties.

In 1975, the first salaried professional director was hired to "plan, coordinate and administer exhibits and other functions of the association."[103] During her first year, Judith Richardson Silvia instituted the "first major overhaul and updating of bylaws" which passed in May 1976, but she resigned shortly thereafter. The association, which had been run for sixty years exclusively by a volunteer board, quickly gained and lost four additional directors in the next

[98]Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1923.
[99]"Secretary's Report," Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1921.
[100]Ibid.
[101]"Report of the Secretary," Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1932.
[102]Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1923.
[103]"Report of the President," Art Association of Newport, "Annual Report," 1975.

decade. Symptomatic of this difficult transitional period were the sale in 1978 of eleven paintings to cover a deficit.

Frederick P. Walkey, formerly the director of the DeCordova Museum in Lincoln, Massachusetts, was hired as director in 1983, and instituted several major changes during his short time there. He changed the name to the Newport Art Museum and Art Association and made additional amendments to the by-laws, clarifying the role of the trustees to professional staff and doubling the number of Trustees.

Cora Lee Gibbs, a former curator of education at RISD Museum of Art, took over as director in 1985, and remained in that role for eight years. Extensive capital improvements were implemented, including the construction of an addition to the Cushing Gallery, a climate controlled, secure space, intended to attract donations of works of art. The year after the addition opened the collections of the Museum tripled in size, and the accessioning and loan procedures were professionalized.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

__ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_X_ 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:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
__ Other State Agency
__ Federal Agency
__ Local Government
__ University
__ Other (Specify Repository):

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 2.41 acres

UTM References:	**Zone**	**Easting**	**Northing**
	19	307250	4595050

Verbal Boundary Description:

That certain tract or parcel of land, situate in Newport, bounded as follows:

On the North by Old Beach Road;
On the East by Liberty Street;
On the South by Downing Streeet; and
On the West by Bellevue Avenue.

Boundary Justification:

The nominated property includes the parcel upon which the John N. A. Griswold House and stable, which maintain their historic integrity from the period of significance, have stood since they were constructed.

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