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February 28, 2024

Diane M. Williamson, AICP, CFM
Director of Community Development
Town of Bristol Dept. of Community Development
10 Court Street
Bristol, RI 02809

Re: "Re-Survey of the Bristol Waterfront National Register Historic District"
(Bid #1020) – Progress Report #3

Dear Diane,

This letter constitutes the fifth progress report on the above referenced project, for the period February 1-29, 2024.

Work Completed To Date. Brent Runyon and I are pleased to confirm that the following draft work products, which are due to be submitted tomorrow in electronic format (copied onto flash drives), will be hand-delivered today to you and to Joanna Doherty at the R.I. Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission:

Spreadsheets: 38 draft spreadsheets (one sheet per street in the Bristol Waterfront NR HD, plus one sheet for Monuments/Variou Locations), containing collected data on 1,140 individual buildings, structures, sites, and objects. Each spreadsheet records the following information:

- Address.
- Assessor's plat and lot numbers.
- RIHPHC-assigned ID number (if none, then "[no ID]").
- Historic name (if not known, then building type).
- Architectural style.
- Date of construction.
- Whether the property was mentioned in the 1975 NR nomination.
- Alterations to major architectural features since 1978.
- Contributing/Non-Contributing status in 1978, and recommended C/NC now.
- Whether the property is also located in the Bristol Historic District overlay zone designated by the Town of Bristol.
- Photo numbers.

- Comments, including other notable alterations beyond the 6 major architectural features; the presence of a plaque issued by the Bristol Historic and Preservation Society; and other pertinent information.

Photographs: 2,465 digital photographs, organized in folders by street name (plus one folder for monuments and memorials), each labeled with street address and compass direction of the image, e.g.: “BRIS_BaySt001_NE.” Photographs of primary buildings include views of garages and other outbuildings that stand on the same lot, wherever possible.

As a reminder, the 1978 inventory list for the Bristol Waterfront National Register Historic District (provided to us by RIHPHC at the outset of this project) contained 1,370 contributing and non-contributing buildings, structures, sites, and objects. Per our scope of work, we eliminated any outbuildings that share a lot with their associated primary buildings (but we did re-survey any outbuildings that stand on a separate lot), as well as any parking lots, vacant lots, or side/rear yards that were itemized on the 1978 inventory list. As we collected data on the remaining properties, we discovered that:

- 57 historic properties (most of them, previously surveyed) were not on the 1978 inventory list. These properties are included in the spreadsheets, and their absence from the 1978 inventory list and/or from RIHPHC survey files is noted in the “Comments” column.
- 27 buildings have been demolished since 1978, and 5 objects (monuments or memorials) were removed or relocated outside the NR HD. These properties are also included in the spreadsheets (in italic font), although not counted in the tally of properties re-surveyed.
- 33 buildings (including a few outbuildings on separate lots) and two public parks were constructed after 1978. A few of these “new” buildings appear to be historic, despite the construction date on the tax card; these are noted in the “Comments” column as needing further research.

As you review these work products, please note:

All **address numbers** are current. The default address is the number(s) displayed on a building; if no numbers were observed in the field, we matched it to a previously surveyed address or used the address identified on tax cards. Changes in address numbers since previous surveys, and conflicts in address numbers between different sources, are noted in the “Comments” column in the spreadsheets. Where a building stands on a lot bounded by two different streets and address numbers are displayed on

both sides, that building will be found under its primary address (as displayed on the principal façade), but the secondary address is also cross-referenced.

All **Assessor's plat and lot numbers** are current. Changes to these numbers since previous surveys (e.g., due to the merger or subdivision of lots) are noted in the spreadsheets. Where two (or more) primary buildings stand upon the same lot, that is also noted in the spreadsheets.

Property names and dates were copied from the 1978 NR inventory list. Where name/date discrepancies emerged between the 1975 NR nomination, the 1978 NR inventory list, and/or plaques affixed to buildings (many of which were issued by the Bristol Historical & Preservation Society), those discrepancies are highlighted in red type in the spreadsheets to flag them as needing resolution prior to a future update of the NR nomination.

Many spreadsheets also contain some general notes relative to pervasively incorrect historic names (e.g, 1970s-era businesses; the word "Apartments"). These errors can also be addressed in a future update of the NR nomination.

For the **assessment of alterations** that have occurred since 1978 (when the comprehensive inventory of the NR district was compiled), we limited our observations to changes affecting six major architectural features: height, massing, wall material, trim, windows, and porches. Other alterations deemed to have had a notable impact on overall integrity were noted in the Comments column. Typically, we used photos and written descriptions on previous RIHPHC survey forms to make these assessments.

For the **assessment of current contributing/non-contributing status**, we used our best judgment relative to the impact on integrity of alterations affecting the six designated major architectural features. As a baseline standard, changes to three or fewer of these features were typically deemed "C," while changes to four or more were deemed "NC." However, a multitude of nuances can enter this calculus, including the accumulation of various other alterations. We have used "C?" and "NC?" (highlighted in red type) where the judgment call could go either way, and will look to guidance from RIHPHC for the final determination.

For those buildings deemed NC in 1978 because they were less than 50 years old at that time, but have now aged into potential NR eligibility, we have recommended C as long as the building retains fair to good integrity. Our forthcoming project report will include a defined period of significance for the NR district; once we have confirmed the end date, some of our draft recommendations as to C/NC status for individual properties may need to be revised. But for the time being, we have assumed that anything dated 1974 or earlier can be considered C.

Bristol has dozens of **monuments and memorials** located in various public parks and on or adjacent to public sidewalks. Some of these recognize historical individuals, entities, events, or themes: e.g. the Capt. Benjamin Church Monument on Constitution Street, the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company Monument on Hope Street, or the R.I. Slave Medallions at Linden Place on Hope Street and the DeWolf Warehouse on Thames Street. Many monuments and memorials honor military service in various wars, as well as public service by police officers and firefighters; some also posthumously honor individual service members. Commemorative objects like these are typically not considered NR eligible except under certain criteria, one of which is being “integral to a historic district,” and the other is having some particular significance in its own right due to “design, age, tradition, or symbolic value” (as those terms are defined by the NR). Monuments and memorials identified in the 1978 NR inventory list were typically deemed “contributing,” including those that were less than 50 years old at that time; and many more have been installed in the NR historic district since then. We will seek guidance from RIHPHC for final determinations of “C” and “NC” status for these.

Next Steps. While awaiting any comments on the work products submitted today, we will begin work on a draft report of findings and recommendations, which is due at the end of April. (Note that on February 5, we obtained the long-awaited large format working map depicting the area of the NR HD (including property lot lines, street addresses, and building footprints), which we will use in preparation of the draft project report.)

Our next progress report will be submitted on March 31, 2024.

Invoice #5, in the amount of \$5,000, representing an incremental portion of the project fee (per the bid documents) is also submitted along with this report, via email.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments about this report.

Sincerely,

Kathryn J. Cavanaugh
Historic Preservation Consultant

cc: Nick Toth, MPA, Planner and HDC Clerk, Bristol Dept. of Community Development
Joanna Doherty, Deputy Director, RIHP&HC