



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION

Old State House 150 Benefit Street Providence, RI 02903

Telephone 401-222-2678  
TTY 401-222-3700

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[www.preservation.ri.gov](http://www.preservation.ri.gov)

January 14, 2025

Via email: [lturmer@crmc.ri.gov](mailto:lturmer@crmc.ri.gov) & [jabbruzzese@crmc.ri.gov](mailto:jabbruzzese@crmc.ri.gov), CRMC

Raymond Coia, Chair  
Coastal Resources Management Council  
Oliver H. Stedman Government Center  
4808 Tower Hill Road  
Wakefield, Rhode Island 02879

Re: CRMC File Number: 2024-02-112 & 2024-06-087  
Applicant: William J. Ruh Trust  
88 Washington Street  
Newport, RI



Dear Mr. Coia:

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) staff has reviewed the new information that the applicant provided for the above-referenced Preliminary Determination Request and Application for State Assent. The William J. Ruh Trust proposes to construct a new building at 88 Washington Street in Newport, RI.

As you are aware, the property is a contributing resource in the Newport National Historic Landmark District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and a designated National Historic Landmark. The property is improved by the ca. 1725 John Tripp House which was moved to the site in 1965.

In our prior letter dated July 11, 2024, we noted the setback of the new building had been changed so that the new building and the Tripp House are now roughly the same distance from Washington Street. We found this setback to be acceptable and acknowledged that the new setback and alignment helped to make the new construction more compatible with the Tripp House.

In the same letter, we noted that the scale of the new building was not compatible with the Tripp House and inquired about lowering the height of the new building and reducing the size of the window and door openings. The owner has proposed to reduce the size of the window openings on the façade elevation, while maintaining the door size and the height of the building. While the height of the new building remains unchanged, it is not inconsistent with other historic homes on the street, and the Colonial Revival design is appropriate for the area.

Based on the design alterations that have been instituted and taking into account the approval of the previous design by the Newport District Commission, we no longer object to CRMC issuing the permit.

To: Raymond Coia  
Re: 88 Washington St., Newport

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January 17, 2025  
CRMC 2024-02-112 & 2024-06-087

These comments are provided in accordance with *650-RICR-20-00-1.2.3 Areas of Historic and Archaeological Significance* of the Coastal Resources Management Council. If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth Totten (elizabeth.totten@preservation.ri.gov), Project Review Coordinator, of this office.

Sincerely,

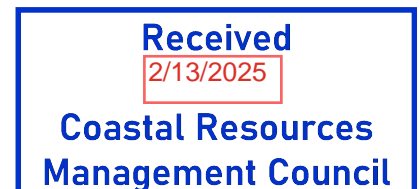


Jeffrey Emidy  
Executive Director  
State Historic Preservation Officer

Copy via email:

Applicant's architect, Madeline Melchert, Hull Cove Designs,  
madeline@hullcovedesign.com

Abutters' representative, Shantia Anderheggen, Preservation Strategies,  
shantia@preservation-strategies.com





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July 11, 2024

Via email: lturner@crmc.ri.gov & jabbruzzese@crmc.ri.gov, CRMC

Raymond Coia, Chair  
Coastal Resources Management Council  
Oliver H. Stedman Government Center  
4808 Tower Hill Road  
Wakefield, Rhode Island 02879



Re: CRMC File Number: 2024-02-112 & 2024-06-087  
Applicant: William J. Ruh Trust  
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Newport, RI

Dear Mr. Coia:

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) staff has reviewed the information that your office provided for the above-referenced Preliminary Determination Request and Application for State Assent. The William J. Ruh Trust proposes to construct a new building at 88 Washington Street in Newport, RI.

The property is a contributing resource in the Newport National Historic Landmark District, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and a designated National Historic Landmark. The property is improved by the ca. 1725 John Tripp House which was moved to the site in 1965.

The two applications (2024-02-112 and 2024-06-087) vary in the siting of the new building. Based upon discussion with CRMC staff, the RIHPHC understands that the siting depicted on the "Proposed Conditions Plan" prepared by Principe Company, Inc. on 6/10/24 is what is being considered by CRMC and what is proposed – this varies from earlier drawings prepared by Cove Architects on 6/6/24 most notably in that the Principe drawings depict the new building and Tripp House at roughly the same distance from Washington Street. This setback is acceptable to the RIHPHC, whereas the previously proposed setback was not compatible with the historic building.

The roof ridge of the new building will be 9'2" taller than the ridge of the Tripp House; the floor to floor heights will differ by nearly 4' with the Tripp House at 7'3" and the new construction at 11' first floor to second floor. The new building's façade is designed in a Colonial Revival-style with five bays and a recessed center entrance, evenly spaced shed roof dormers, and a gambrel roof. The two houses will be connected by a walkway between them and a deck at the rear.

The RIHPHC applies the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* (Standards) to our review of the alterations to historic properties. It is our opinion that the massing, size, and scale of new construction is incompatible with the Tripp House and as such, it does not meet the Standards, specifically Standard 9, which states:

New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.

As proposed, the new construction dominates the site; the Tripp House appears to be an ancillary structure to the new building. The new building should be submissive to the historic building and surroundings. This has been achieved in part by the new setback and aligning the new construction with the Tripp House. The scale of the new building still needs to be compatible with the historic building. This can be achieved by reducing the height of the new building – specifically the floor to ceiling height and the window and door height on the first floor. As designed, the new building will have a monumental scale that dwarfs the historic house. Where a standard door and window height are 6'8", this new building proposes doors and windows that are 8' tall. The 10' first floor ceiling could be lowered to 9' and still have gracious proportions. Lowering the ceiling height, windows and doors on the street façade (where there are no living spaces) could make the street façade more in keeping with the scale of the houses immediately adjacent.

These comments are provided in accordance with *650-RICR-20-00-1.2.3 Areas of Historic and Archaeological Significance* of the Coastal Resources Management Council. If you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth Totten (elizabeth.totten@preservation.ri.gov), Project Review Coordinator, of this office.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Emidy  
Executive Director  
State Historic Preservation Officer

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