



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION

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February 14, 2023

Via email: [thomas.j.kravitz@warwickri.com](mailto:thomas.j.kravitz@warwickri.com)

Thomas J Kravitz  
Planning Director  
City of Warwick  
3275 Post Road  
Warwick, Rhode Island 02886

Re: RIHPHC Project No. 17167  
Sale of city-owned property  
34 Warwick Lake Avenue  
Warwick, Rhode Island

Dear Mr. Kravitz:

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) staff has reviewed the information that you provided for the sale of city-owned property at 34 Warwick Lake Avenue in Warwick. The City of Warwick (City) has advertised the sale of the property for a new residential development of up to 28 units.

The property is improved by a former grammar school that was constructed in 1925-1926 in the Art Deco style and designed by Thomas J.H. Pierce. By 1958, the building was used as the Warwick School Department Administration Building. An addition was constructed between 1962 and 1972. The RIHPHC considers the building to be eligible for listing in the State Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C for its association with educational trends in Warwick and as an excellent example of an Art Deco-style school building.

As stated in RIGL 42-45-5(b), "The state, a city or town, or any subdivision or instrumentality thereof shall not undertake, fund, or license and activity which will encroach upon, damage, or destroy, physically, visually, or environmentally, any site, building, place, landmark, or area included in the state register without first obtaining the advice of the historical preservation and heritage commission." The sale of the property is considered by this office to be an undertaking subject to this clause, as it will facilitate any future development of the site, which will likely result in demolition of the school building. Furthermore, the regulations state that an adverse effect is "transfer, lease, or sale of the property, without adequate provision for its continued preservation." Therefore, it is the conclusion of the RIHPHC that the sale of the property will result in an adverse effect to the building.

Initially, the property was advertised for sale in 2022 but the City did not receive competitive bids. Since then, the City has allowed a higher density zoning for the property. This will permit the construction of up to 28 residential units on site, which the City believes is the highest and

best use of the property. The City has shown the building is in poor condition due to water intrusion which has permeated both floors. The building also has peeling paint and likely contains hazardous materials. The failed sale of the property suggests the building is not likely to undergo rehabilitation.

The adverse effects to the historic resource that are caused by the neglected maintenance and imminent sale will have to be mitigated. We suggest a mitigation package consisting of two elements to be carried out by the City: the preparation of a Rhode Island Historic Resources Archive document for the former grammar school, and an architectural survey of the existing City school buildings. If the City agrees to this mitigation, then the RIHPHC will prepare a memorandum of agreement (MOA). Until the time that the adverse effect is eliminated, or mitigation agreed to, we object to the sale of the property.

These comments are provided in accordance with the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Act and Rhode Island General Laws. If you have any questions, please contact RIHPHC Project Review Coordinator Elizabeth Totten at 401-222-2671 or [elizabeth.totten@preservation.ri.gov](mailto:elizabeth.totten@preservation.ri.gov).

Sincerely,

*Elizabeth Totten*  
FOR

Jeffrey Emidy  
Executive Director  
Interim State Historic Preservation Officer

→ LIKELY REQUIRED FOR ALDRICH PRIOR TO  
DEMO, IF DESIRED