

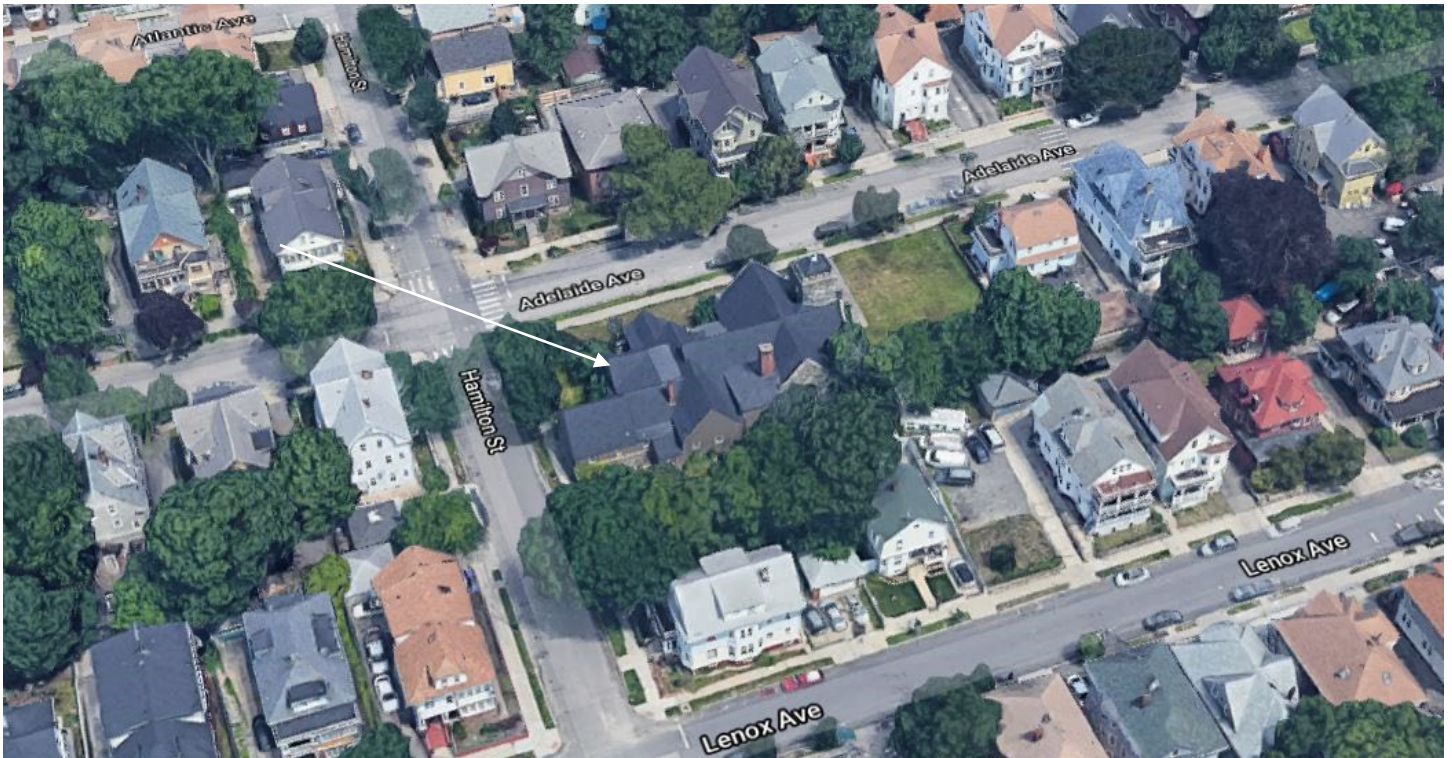
PROJECT REVIEW

- CASE 22.030, 126 ADELAIDE AVENUE, Westminster Congregational Church (Unitarian) 2 / Hood Memorial AME Zion Church, 1901 (PLD-RES)**
This complex was erected by the Westminster Unitarian Society, a parish founded in 1828. In 1901 the congregation, compelled by the crush of business to vacate its venerable 4 Mathewson Street church, erected the modest shingle and stone chapel at the corner of Hamilton Street. This Woodbury Memorial Chapel, named for Augustus Woodbury, pastor of the church from 1857 to 1892, was designed by Howard K. Hilton and built by Theodore A. Perry, mason, and Thomas H. Doane, carpenter. The handsome cross-gable stone, auditorium-type, Gothic sanctuary, also designed by Hilton, was completed in 1907. In 1959 the Westminster Society moved to East Greenwich. The property was sold to the Friendship United Methodist Church, a predominantly Swedish group founded in 1883 in South Providence. This church was dissolved in September 1977. The church complex has become the home of the Hood Memorial Church, the descendant of Black Methodist congregations which had met since, the early 1860s at 148 Wadsworth Street in West Elmwood.

CONTRIBUTING



Arrow indicated 126 Adelaide Avenue



Arrow indicates project location, looking north.

Owner/Applicant: Touchdown Realty, 319 Main Street, North Kingstown, RI 02852

Architect: David Sisson Architecture PC, 345 Taunton Ave, East Providence, RI 02914

Proposal: The scope of work proposed consists of Major Alterations and includes:

- requesting permission for the painting of the stone exterior.

Issues: The following issues are relevant to this application:

- At the 08/22/22 meeting the applicant received final approval for the rehabilitation of the structure into residential apartments with the modification of the roofline, addition of dormers and the introduction/removal of fenestration and doors. A sub-committee was formed to review construction details;
- The applicant contacted staff to discuss the potential painting/staining of the building due to issues with the condition of the stone and repointing, which is producing an uneven appearance. Staff stated that the Standards do not allow for painting of unpainted masonry. If the applicant wished to explore, Staff recommend doing a few discrete samples with different colors on the building and having the sub-committee convene to look at the samples and make a recommendation; the applicant agreed to this. Unfortunately, there was a miscommunication between the applicant and painters and portions of the building have now been painted/stained black. Staff contacted the applicant and requested no further work be done and would schedule matter before full Commission. Applicant agreed.
- At the 05/20/24 meeting the applicant submitted the following to Staff via email and provided additional information at the meeting:
 - "Jay, please see photos of the current state of unpainted stone and mortar @ 126 Adelaide. As you can see, the stone and mortar are still very much in distress even after being treated, and re-mortared. After being neglected for decades and uncared for, the stone needed extensive work, far beyond anything we imagined nor budgeted for. Water was seeping into the building due to compromised areas on the stone, cracks etc., and failed mortar in countless areas. Well before esthetics, stopping the water from penetrating the interior was our top priority, and a different task to say the least. Once water leaks were mitigated (large expense), we then realized just how bad the condition of the stone was overall, with massive amounts of discoloration, previous make-shift mortar jobs, and algae build up scattered throughout. The above issues alone sparked the thought to unify the stone with paint.

When we spoke last you asked me to look at "natural colors" for the paint. I did have renderings created with various shades of grey to match the deep taupe cedar stain, and I can say with honesty - that nothing compares to the black obsidian paint, which has worked like magic unifying the stone and will dramatically highlight the revived stained-glass windows surrounding the building as well. For clarity, the style of the building is Gothic and calls for a deep exterior. Black is a natural color. Whether it is obsidian, basalt, or the many black gemstones you can find scattered throughout our planet, there isn't a more complete natural color I'd rather use on the stone @ 126 Adelaide Avenue than black. When I researched the metaphysical meaning of the Obsidian Black, I found that it is known for protection & healing. I saw this as alignment, as the previous usage as a church had the same underlying purpose - to protect & heal. I was happy to find that not only were their active churches with black exteriors as shown in the attached photos, but I was also able to find that a family converted a historic church and used the same color concept - black painted masonry body with a wood exterior door. It goes to show how appealing this color concept is.

In closing I have attached a handful of historic restoration project Touchdown has designed and completed with our architect Dave Sisson. I share this info for 2 reasons A.) give you a glimpse into our design style, and B.) though only a few are shown in links below - I'd like to make you aware that we have converted SEVERAL deeply distressed historic buildings throughout the state, transforming them from long forgotten structures into award winning/magazine featured statement pieces I say the above not to boast, but more to show how dedicated we are to our design work at Touchdown. delivering original re-creations that gleam authenticity. We spend the time researching the era and time period each historic structure originated, then merging it with bold, modern concepts that breathe new life into these structures - gracefully combining our ideas with history itself. You will notice every one of our historic restorations is black in some form or fashion."

The Commission had the following comments: there was a discussion reading the type of paint? Was it possible to remove? Applicant stated was a masonry/latex mix. Unsure if can be removed. Given nature of some of the stone, could be difficult. Should be restoring character in an historic district, matching mortar, maybe apply a clear coat. Concern by the Commission over painting the masonry and the effect on the overall building, creating a more homogenous surface, which no longer allows the character and the depth of the stone. Paint is not a solution for deteriorating masonry and can lead to further problems, exacerbating the situation. Discussion was held and agreed that a special meeting on-site to evaluate solutions would be best step forward. The applicant agreed.

- On 06/06/24 a special meeting was held on-site, with members Haggerty, Sanderson, Dotson, Fontecchio, Verity and Wilson attending along with Staff and the applicant. At the meeting the members present were able to view the surfaces that had been painted. Chair Haggerty noted that it was striking, color is a lot, existing conditions are not optimal and have doubts paint can be removed. Member Fontecchio suggested to try removing paint from a 4'x4' area, even if all doesn't come off, would allow for variation in the stone. Member Verity stated lost character, uniformity of paint does not allow for variation that the stone provided. Member Wilson stated that the black color is too strong, masks inherent quality of stone, curious if can be removed, try a small area, but has doubts. Vice-Chair Sanderson suggested walnut blasting might work if done properly. Asked if Commission has

purview over mortar? Staff responded yes. Mr. Clayton stated his intent was to paint building (see minutes of 05/20/24 meeting for more background). Staff stated that he is misinterpreting the Standard. Conversation became escalatory, Chair Haggerty gained order. Discussion ensued for next steps: applicant is to try to remove paint from both the smoother, ashlar and the rougher stone areas, with Staff and the Commission to return to view samples and decide on next steps. The applicant agreed. Ms. Dotson made the motion, Mr. Fontecchio seconded, the motion passed unanimously.

- At the 11/25/24 meeting the applicant appeared before the Commission. After discussion it was suggested that the painted masonry on the stone, which is primarily on the front façade, be allowed to be kept. The Commission and the applicant agreed to have the subcommittee review what portion of the building had/had not been painted and would decide on further treatment of the unpainted surfaces. The Commission delegated to staff to coordinate and approve a final color for the masonry that is/would be painted.
- The applicant has attempted to remove the painted surfaces. Pictures and videos were provided to Staff who also conducted site visits to inspect the samples. Attempts were made using three separate chemical systems, including a method recommended to Staff by the RIHPHC; with walnut abrasion methods; and has consulted a reputable mason, Jon Israel, who has concluded that: "After making a site visit and meeting with the owner and his foreman at 126 Adelaide Ave in Providence to view the painted masonry. I have determined that the paint will not fully come off the stone. It was my understanding that the owner initially used a paint removal product suggested by his paint rep. That didn't work and the owner and his foreman also shared that the city had given some paint removal suggestions. Including walnut shells and heavy-duty stripper by Prosoco, all of which didn't work. After reviewing all three of these paint removal methods, which were all methods I would have used as well, I found no evidence that the paint would in fact fully come off of the masonry. I expressed to the owner that painting masonry would not be my first choice. However, In the case for 126 Adelaide Ave, with years of poor maintenance and many different repointing attempts, it is my professional option that a coat of paint suitable for masonry would be the best option from where we stand today. I have extended my masonry services to the owner moving forward, so in the event they face masonry issues another project, I can provide guidance earlier in the process."
- Staff's opinion is that the masonry, where painted, should be repainted in an acceptable color. However, all unpainted masonry, which is the majority of the surfaces, should not be painted and treated with a proper clear coating as needed for protection.
- Photos have been submitted.

Recommendations: The staff recommends the PHDC make the following findings of fact:

- a) 126 Adelaide Ave is a structure of historical and architectural significance that contribute to the significance of the Providence Landmarks District-Residential, having been recognized as a contributing structure to the Elmwood National Register Historic District;
- b) The application for Major Alterations is considered complete;
- c) The Commission's Standard for REPAIRS, IN-KIND REPLACEMENT AND RESTORATION, MASONRY, state that "Masonry that has not previously been painted should not be painted unless deterioration has progressed so far that a protective surface coating is needed. In such cases, use a breathable masonry paint in a color consistent with the natural masonry";
- d) The work as originally proposed is not in accord with PHDC Standards 4 & 8 as follows: Minimal alteration of the building, structure, site or environment shall be made (Standard 4), and the proposal as submitted destroys the historic character of the property or the district and is aesthetically incompatible with the property and district and will have an adverse effect on the property and district (Standard 8); and,
- e) The work if amended to paint the previously painted masonry a compatible color with the remaining unpainted masonry to be treated with a proper clear coating as needed for protection is in accord with PHDC Standard 8 as follows: the proposal as submitted, while diminishing the historic character, does not destroy the historic character of the property or the district and is aesthetically compatible with the property and district and will not have an adverse effect on the property and district, as the masonry has deteriorated to a where a protective coat is needed (Standard 8).

Staff recommends a motion be made stating that: The application for 126 Adelaide Ave, a contributing resource of the Providence Landmarks District-Residential, recognized as a contributing structure to the Elmwood National Register Historic District considered complete. The Commission cites Standard 8 in granting Final Approval of the application as amended, to paint the previously painted masonry a compatible color with the remaining unpainted masonry to be treated with a proper clear coating as needed for protection, is appropriate having, having a size, scale and form that, while diminishing the historic character, will not create an adverse effect to the property or the district, as the masonry has deteriorated to a where a protective coat is needed (Standard 8), citing and agreeing to the recommendations in the staff report, with staff to review any additional details.













Nature Walk
8006-12E

Soft Panther
8006-12F

Ground Truth
8006-11E

Grey Suit
4004-2A

H014-1

H014-1

TRICORN BLACK
HGSW6258

PEPPERCORN
HGSW7674