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The Landmarks of Federal Hill: Post Civil War: A time of development

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The Landmarks

Post Civil War: A time of development

The estates along Broadway, of the post-Civil War period were large and of varied designs and type, in contrast to the more conservative East Side homes of Providence. Their owners strove to have flamboyant and pretentious structures which were similar to the contemporary villas of Newport, only being miniatures of them. Disregarding the formal architectural and the scholarly ornamentation of the dwellings that were being erected in the 1860's, the George W. Prentice home at 514 Broadway, which was built around 1875, is probably the best example of what took place.

An excellent example of this expression still exists at 159 Sutton Street, the 1875 Carriage House of the Eddy Estate, which retained the formal design of a central pavilion and spire, expresses a robust monumentality through oversized and mixed architectural detail. The surface is crowded and active, with carved granite tile, a rose window, and a clock contained within the pavilion.

Another is the Eddy Mansion at 299 Broadway which brings out the flatter details, and "stick style" ornamentation of the 1870's. This home was extensively altered during the following years, into a Queen Anne Style home, and today, it perhaps, is the most extravagant expressive building on Broadway, with stick style and Queen Anne pierced and turned ornaments, a chateau roofed front turret, and a sunbonnet side gable, glazed bays with stained glass, and a twelvesided tower with a corner roof. The Prentice House and the Eddy House begin to show considerable signs of neglect. Unfortunately, they have not been kept in good repair. This home at 299 Broadway, for many years, was the Dr. Mielo homestead. It was truly a "show palace", filled with a large and beautiful collection of paintings, marble statuary, and other art works.

The last twenty years of the nineteenth century was a period of great development for the Broadway area, and the Queen Anne Style is well represented. An excellent example of this style, as it was, is at 477 Broadway, which was built before 1890, with its variety of detail and texture. This was an elaborate home.

In contrast, the two homes at 77 and 81 Parade Street, overlooking the Dexter Training Ground, and the cottage at 4 Brighton Street, which all date from the 1890's, they demonstrate how fully surface designs could distinguish the basic appearance of a building. But all three, are excellent examples of the trend from a more angular and broken style of that period, to a smoother, more continuously surfaced building.

While such important buildings were being erected, real estate developers were subdividing the remaining open land, first in scattered small groups, but later, in whole blocks. The arrangements of these sub-division houseslots were suburban in layout, following in general, the traditional square subdivision pattern of land, but greater attention was paid to the qual-
suffered considerable neglect, because at least one third of its residences were not kept in good repair, or because occupants sold them, or moved to suburban areas. As the population dwindled, the public buildings have been consolidated, leaving vacant schools and churches, as well as houses. Urban renewal has more recently disturbed the character of this area, through spot demolition of dwellings, while the complete rebuilding of certain perimeter areas has resulted in a further centralization of what today is referred to as Federal Hill.

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United States Department of Interior

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