

Audrain Building
220-230 Bellevue Ave.
Newport
Newport County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-333

HABS
RI,
3-NEWP,
41-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington D.C. 20240

AUDRAIN BUILDING

HABS
RI,
3-NEWP,
41-

Location: 220-230 Bellevue Avenue.

Present Owner: Audrain Building, Inc.

Present Occupants: 220, 222: Puritan Ladies Apparel; 224: Newport Bridal Fashions; 226: Entrance to upstairs offices; 22B, 230: Richard R. Knowles, M.D., Paul C. Houston, M.D., Anthony T. Carrellas, M.D.

Present Use: Rented commercial and office space.

Statement of
Significance:

The Audrain Building was built in 1902-1903 for Adolphe L. Audrain and was designed by the New York architect Bruce Price. The Audrain Building is particularly significant as one of the four buildings that comprise a distinguished commercial street, the east side of Bellevue Avenue beginning at Memorial Boulevard and running south. The development of the street began at the north with the building of the Travers Block at the corner in 1870-1871. Designed by Richard Morris Hunt, it is an important example of his early style. The next building, and the next one in date, is the Newport Casino. The largest of the four, and historically the best known, it was not only a commercial building but also a social center for the summer colony. Built in 1880-1881, it is a well known example of the Shingle Style by the architects McKim, Mead, and White. It has been placed on the National Register. The third building in the group is the King Block, designed by the Boston architects Perkins and Betton and built in 1892-1893. The Audrain Building is the southern anchor of the group. The four buildings maintain a long street line and are basically related in scale and massing. They are also related in their use of richly textured surfaces which at the same time allows great variety and liveliness. Without matching, the buildings compliment each other in a particularly urbane way and form an ensemble which should be preserved.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

The building is located in Plot 33, Lot 45. The following is an incomplete chain of title from Newport City Clerk's Records for the city of Newport. Reference is to number and volume of the Land Evidence Books, (LEB.--,p.--).

1902 Deed of November 1, 1902, recorded in LEB. 81, pp. 33-7.

From: Ralph Riess
To: Adolphe L. and Mary E. Audrain
For: \$35,000

"...certain lot with buildings... bounded Northerly on land of devisees of LeRoy King, 221.06 feet Easterly on land of the city of Newport, 109.93 feet, occupied by Newport Casino, Southerly on land of grantor, 220.7 feet, and Westerly on Bellevue Avenue, 110 feet..."

1938 Deed of September 2, 1938, recorded in Probate Records Volume 109, p. 57.

From: Mary E. Audrain, died February 26, 1938
To: Marguerite M. Adrian, by last will and testament

Marguerite M. Adrian was the daughter of Marie Audrain Brigham, a deceased sister of Adolphe L. Audrain.

1950 Deed of November 7, 1950, recorded in LEB. 174, pp. 212-14.

From: Marguerite M. Adrian
To: Standard Furniture, Inc.

1956 Deed of May 15, 1956, recorded in LEB. 190, pp. 121-22.

From: Standard Furniture, Inc.
To: Lawrence H. and Ruth E. Simon

"...bounded Westerly by Bellevue Avenue 110 feet, Northerly by land of Caiger 113.06 feet, Easterly by land of Rooney, 110 feet, and Southerly on Casino Terrace 112.7 feet..."

1958 Deed of October 20, 1958, recorded in LEB. 197,
pp. 32-3.

From: Lawrence H. and Ruth E. Simon
To: Audrain Building, Inc.

2. Date of erection: 1902-1903.
 3. Architect: Bruce Price.
 4. Builder or contractor: M. A. McCormick of Newport.
 5. Original plans: None known.
 6. Alterations and additions: The interiors have been re-modelled for the changing commercial uses.
- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:
- C. Sources of Information:
1. Primary and unpublished sources:
Records of Deeds in Newport City Hall.
 2. Secondary and published sources:
Newport Journal and Weekly News, February 28, 1903, p. 5.
 3. Likely sources not yet investigated:
Office records of Bruce Price.
Dissertation on Bruce Price by Sam Graybill, Yale University.

Prepared by Thomas M. Slade
University of Notre Dame
Project Historian
July, 1970

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Audrain Building is a handsome building, combining a thorough understanding of revival ornamental forms with the demand for open, glassy shop fronts, characteristic of much of the best commercial architecture at the turn of the century.
2. Condition of fabric: Exteriors are in excellent, unaltered condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 110 feet by 73.5 feet; rectangular plan; 6 bays; 2 stories.
2. Foundations: All foundations are masonry.
3. Wall construction: Street facade and window bay area of the south wall is of dark red pressed brick, with a brightly colored terra cotta trim which is very Renaissance in character. This trim is generously used around window openings, doorways, and cornice. Red common brick walls on the side and rear have limestone trim.
4. Structural system, framing: The exterior of the structure is entirely of masonry construction.
5. Chimneys: One chimney is located in the rear wall.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways: Richly embellished central doorway leads to a stairway to the upper floor.
 - b. Windows: The six bays are defined by tall arches, the top and bottom of which are nearly filled with glass. Copper-sheathed spandrels with raised decoration divide the arches at the second-floor line.
7. Roof: Originally the flat roof was capped by a balustrade which was topped with statuary. This ornamentation no longer exists.
8. Porches, stoops, and bulkheads: Four bulkheads are located at the rear of the building for service purposes.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The facade, with its six bays, visually marks the dimension of each of the six shop areas. The second floor was designed with six offices in the front and five in the rear. The interiors have been remodelled for the changing commercial uses.
2. Stairways: The center entrance stairway provides access to the offices located on the second floor.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The long, 110 foot facade is placed up to the wide sidewalk. To gain entry to the first-floor shops, one must cross a low marble step.

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

Newport HABS Project -- 1970. Sponsored in cooperation with the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Antoinette F. Downing, Chairman. Under the direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS, and Osmund Overby, (University of Missouri), Project Supervisor, Cervin Robinson, photographer.