



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lisa Carnevale
401-954-1135

lisa@myrandagroup.com

Two Days of Post-Industrial Heritage in Providence for the 35th Annual Festival of Historic Houses

***Providence Preservation Society's Signature Event This Year Highlights Houses and a Mill Complex
from the mid-1800s to early-1900s***

Providence, RI (March 13, 2014) – The Providence Preservation Society (PPS) announces the 35th Annual **Festival of Historic Houses**, taking place this year on **June 13, 14, and 15**. The Festival, known for opening some of Providence's most interesting homes, gardens and converted industrial mill spaces to visitors from across the region, highlights Providence's post-industrial heritage through its dynamic housing stock. This signature annual event is an opportunity to hear the stories about the properties' origins and inhabitants, while viewing firsthand the modern day living spaces in Providence's prized historic properties made possible through preservation.

Providence is one of the few mid-sized cities in the U.S. with much of its historic character intact. Its post-industrial heritage is represented throughout the city by both the traditional grand houses of Providence's forefathers and captains of industry; and by the adaptive reuse of the original industrial mill buildings and sites into homes. "We wanted to capture this dynamic environment and use the Festival as a way to increase awareness of Providence's ever-growing and evolving housing stock," said Brent Runyon, executive director of the Providence Preservation Society. "In order to highlight this distinction, we've expanded the Festival into a unique two-day tour event." Today, the Festival brings visitors to two separate areas of the city on the Saturday and Sunday of the Festival weekend. It is kicked off on the Friday evening with a cocktail reception in a private historic home.

The 2014 Festival starts on Saturday in an enclave of homes within the College Hill neighborhood, between Brown University and the Fox Point neighborhood. The area includes some of the last land to be developed on Providence's east side. Its oldest houses include the Federal-style homes of a merchant, a seaman, and a captain; these homes are located amid large, stately residences which include the townhouse of a Rhode Island governor, and the dignified Greek Revival houses of traders, bankers, professors and those who prospered in the mid-19th century textile and manufacturing industries. Approximately ten houses will be open for touring in this area, which includes Cooke, Manning and Hope Streets.

The tour continues on Sunday across town on the edge of Providence's south side at Pearl Street Lofts. The location is an old industrial mill complex converted into live, work and retail space. Built between 1842 and

1857, the site originally housed the New England Butt Company, a manufacturer of cast-iron butt hinges. The company shifted into manufacturing braiding machinery for silk, worsted, and cotton braid as well as telephone, electric light and crinoline wire, and continued this venture until 1983. After various uses, the complex underwent an adaptive reuse development from 2002 to 2004 and today houses 55 units of rentable, buyable and affordable residences and work spaces.

Pearl Street Lofts and Rice Street Studios are home to several creative endeavors: [Studio Dunn](#) is an award-winning furniture and lighting design firm, located in 14,000 sq ft of space in Rice Street Studios. The firm's founder, Asher Dunn, a Forbes' 2014 30 Under 30, also co-founded [Anchor Providence](#) arts and business incubator space, and [Keeseh Woodshop](#), a community workshop with classes - both located in the same space. [DWRI Letterpress](#), which creates custom art prints on museum worthy machinery, and [KITE Architects](#), one of Rhode Island's leading architectural firms, are also located at Pearl Street Lofts. Residential units include unique exposed brick, high ceilings, mezzanines and roof top gardens with views of the city.

Houses in the College Hill neighborhood will be open on Saturday, June 14 from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. Lofts and surrounding tours at Pearl Street Lofts will be open on Sunday, June 15 from Noon – 4:00 pm. The weekend event will also include a ticketed kick-off cocktail party on Friday evening at the Joseph Cooke House on Hope Street. The Friday evening event is a special fundraiser for PPS, and opens the weekend of tours with cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and celebration. On Sunday, KITE Architects will host a special open house reception from 3:00 – 6:00 pm as an extension to the Festival tour.

Tickets purchased in advance are \$35 per day for PPS members/\$40 per day for non-members. Advance two-day tickets are \$75. Day-of tickets are \$45. The Friday evening cocktail event is \$125. For more information, call Angela Kondon at PPS at 831-7440, or email akondon@ppsri.org.

#

RELATED FESTIVAL EVENTS (Dates/Times TBD):

Architectural historian Kathy Cavanaugh will speak on the history and architecture of the focus area for the Saturday tour: Cooke, Manning and Hope Streets. Ms. Cavanaugh recently completed the first architectural survey of this neighborhood in over twenty-five years. Location: TBD; free for PPS members, \$10 to the public.

Tripp Evans, Professor of Art History at Wheaton College, will discuss the historic development of the Pearl Street Lofts buildings and the surrounding neighborhood - a gateway between Downtown and South Providence. This three acre site will be the subject of Professor Evans' next book, which will explore the geological, Native American, Colonial and Industrial history of the area. Location: TBD; free for PPS members, \$10 to the public.

ABOUT THE PROVIDENCE PRESERVATION SOCIETY:

Formed in 1956 to respond to the proposed demolition of a number of 18th- and early 19th-century houses on College Hill, the Providence Preservation Society (PPS) has grown from a small neighborhood group to a multifaceted citywide preservation organization. With a large membership, a professional staff, and countless volunteers, PPS is able to provide a broad range of services that fulfill its mission to improve the quality of life in the City of Providence through historic preservation and the enhancement of the built environment. For more information, visit www.ppsri.org.