

Walking Tour

• Hope Street North •



Bristol Historical & Preservation Society

48 Court Street, PO Box 356
 Bristol, RI 02809-0356
 (401) 253-7223 • www.bhpsri.org

WELCOME to Bristol!

Founded in 1680, **Bristol, Rhode Island**, was incorporated on September 1, 1681. Over time, **Hope Street**, the town's main thoroughfare, became home to many of the town's important residents and significant architecture. As you walk, you may choose to step off the beaten path, wander the side streets, and explore the town. Bristol's 24-block grid is easy to navigate and many buildings have plaques listing the original owner and date of construction. The Historic Hope Street Tour consists of two parts—one tour travels north and the other travels south. Each tour loop covers approximately one mile and begins and ends in front of the Burnside Memorial Hall at the southeast corner of Hope and Court Streets.

1 Burnside Memorial Hall 400 Hope Street (1883)

Burnside Memorial Hall was designed by Stephen C. Earle of Worcester, MA, to honor the memory of Ambrose Everts Burnside, Major-General in the Civil War, Governor of Rhode Island, and U.S. Senator from Rhode Island. Earle was one of the



first graduates of MIT's recently-founded school of architecture and had already designed the Rogers Free Library at 525 Hope Street. The Romanesque Revival building was dedicated as the Town Hall by President Chester A. Arthur and Rhode Island Governor, Augustus O. Bourn. It ceased functioning as Town Hall in 1969 and now serves as an annex to the present Town Hall, located directly behind it at 10 Court Street. In front of the Burnside Memorial is Bristol's Soldiers and Sailors Monument. The Civil War monument was made by the Gorham Company in 1914. Located behind the monument is the Bristol War Veterans Honor Roll Garden.

25 Belvedere Hotel/Harriet Bradford Hotel 423 Hope Street (1901)

The Belvedere Hotel/Harriet Bradford Hotel was built by John Brown Herreshoff in 1901 to accommodate business visitors to the Herreshoff Manufacturing Company (*see Hope Street South Walking Tour*). The 100-room hotel featured a glass-walled roof garden overlooking Bristol harbor. Long vacant, the building was recently restored for condominiums and new businesses on the first floor.



26 John Waldron Bourn House 417 Hope Street (1804)

The John Waldron Bourn House is a Federal-style brick residence with end chimneys. Bourn was a wealthy shipmaster whose company, Bourn & Marshall, owned 42 vessels. His choice of brick as a building material highlights his personal wealth, as most other houses of this time were made of wood. The house is only one of three in Bristol with a Palladian window, visible here on the second floor over the door. John Street originally cut through Bourn's property to Thames Street, allowing him easy access to his wharf.



Point of Interest

Shortly after Bristol's founding, a young lad was sent to deliver lunch to a group of men clearing trees from the Town Common. Although he lived a short distance away, he lost his way in the dense woods, never reaching his destination. The group of now hungry men spent the rest of the afternoon searching for him. When found, the lad was not at all hungry.

23**Easterbrooks-Paull Block**

461-473 Hope Street (1899)

This late Victorian-era commercial block was built by local housewright Joseph L. Buffum for grocer and merchant Frederick A. Easterbrooks. Easterbrooks had lost the previous structure on this site to a fire and opted to rebuild in cast-iron and brick, which was believed to be fireproof. Cast iron was common in larger cities like New York and Boston, where it was used to build skyscrapers. Today, many cast iron buildings have been demolished, making the material even more unusual, especially in small towns like Bristol.

**24****Captain John DeWolf House**

443 Hope Street (1789/1799-1801)

In 1788, Captain John DeWolf left his seafaring career to concentrate on farming. He constructed this Federal-style residence to serve as his “town house” at the same time that he developed his farm on Griswold Avenue. Local housewright Benjamin Norris finished the interior from 1799-1801. DeWolf served in the State Legislature in 1808 and on the State Supreme Court from 1819-22. The portico over the front door was added in 1915 at the same time that the house was moved back from the street line.

**2****Former U.S. Post Office & Customs House**

448 Hope Street (1857)

The former U.S. Post Office & Customs House was designed by Ammi B. Young, Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury, in the Renaissance Revival style. As an employee of the Federal Government, Young completed designs for post offices, customs houses, courthouses, and hospitals all across the country. The building’s classical design helps to identify it as a government facility. In use as a post office and customs house until 1962, this building now contains local businesses and a restaurant.

**3****Y.M.C.A. Building**

450 Hope Street (1899/1912/1967)

Bristol’s branch of the Young Men’s Christian Association was designed by local architect Wallis E. Howe. The Tudor Revival-style building features half-timbering, bay windows, and a recessed entrance under an arched opening. As the headquarters of the Bristol Y.M.C.A., the building originally contained four storefronts on the first floor and a library, a chapel, an auditorium, and a gymnasium on the second floor. In 1912, a new gymnasium was built on the east side of the building and in 1967, a new entrance and lobby was constructed to link the building to the former Post Office and Customs House next door. Vacated by the Y.M.C.A. in 1991, the building currently houses stores on the first floor and offices above.



4

Citizens Bank

464 Hope Street (1964)

The modern-style Citizens Bank Building was designed by the firm of Millman & Sturges in 1964. The designs on the building's corner were created by noted sculptor Hugh Townley, who taught at Brown University in Providence. Local sources suggest that the cut-out shapes may have been inspired by ancient Greek symbols for money. The site at the corner of Hope and State streets has a significant history. The Hezekiah Usher House stood here until it was burned by the British during their May 25, 1778, raid on Bristol. In 1783, the Easterbrooks family built a Federal style house on the site here. It was demolished for the Citizens Bank building in 1964.



5

Bradford/Dimond/Norris House

474 Hope Street (1792, c. 1848)

In 1792, Hersey Bradford built this house atop the ruins of his father's house, which had been burned during the British raid on Bristol in 1778. Hersey owned a ropewalk on Wood Street that supplied many of Bristol's ships during the early Federal period. A ropewalk is a long narrow path or building where rope was made. By 1848, Francis M. Dimond and his wife, Maria, had



acquired most of the property. They likely commissioned local architect Russell Warren to move the house away from the street; Francis had already worked with Warren to construct an Ionic-order Greek Revival House in 1838 (*See*

#18). The architect added the northern bay, which was used as a ballroom, the third story, the Chinese Chippendale balustrade, and the Ionic-order porch. In 1859, the house passed to Francis and Maria's daughter, Isabella, and her husband, Samuel Norris, co-founder of the profitable Bristol Sugar Refinery. The Norris family owned the house until 1942.

21

Rogers Free Library

525 Hope Street (1877/1960/2008)

The Rogers Free Library was commissioned by Maria DeWolf Rogers as a memorial to her late husband, Robert Rogers. The architect, Stephen C. Earle, would later design the Burnside Memorial Building at 400 Hope Street in a similar Richardsonian Romanesque style (*See #4*). The original structure was three stories



high and included not just philanthropic space but also housing for the Bristol Institution for Savings and the local Y.M.C.A. Upon completion, the building was given to the Town of Bristol for use as a "free" or public

library. In July, 1957, the library caught fire, burning most of the interior and the roof. Local architect Wallace E. Howe developed a redesign that salvaged the structure as a one-story library. In 2008, a three story addition and connecting lobby were added on the north side to create a modern library to serve the town. Step inside to browse the collections, displays by the Bristol Art Museum, and view the portrait of Maria Rogers.

22

Bristol Post Office

515 Hope Street (1962)

Although it may not appear to be so, the Bristol Post Office is a mid-twentieth-century building. It was designed by Philemon Sturges, whose firm also designed the modern Citizens Bank Building at 464 Hope Street (*See #4*). The exterior woodwork, stained glass windows, and doors were salvaged from the historic Bosworth/Wardwell House (1815), which stood on this site. Step inside the lobby for a better view of the beautiful Federal-style transom over the front doors. On September 16, 2018, the Bristol Post Office was dedicated in memory of Bristolian 1st Sgt. P. Andrew McKenna, Jr.



19**Industrial Trust Company**

601 Hope Street (1952)

This bank building was erected on the site of the Captain John Fletcher House, a Doric temple house designed in 1838 by Russell Warren. In 1952, the Industrial Trust Company moved its offices from the first floor of the Rogers Free Library building to this new facility, designed in the Colonial Revival style by local architect Wallace E. Howe.

**20****Commercial Bank Building**

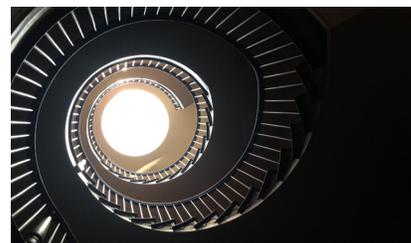
565-567 Hope Street (1814/early 20th century)

A first-rate example of Federal-era commercial architecture, this building was erected for Bristol's second largest banking firm, which had been established in 1809. By 1820, the Commercial Bank was the town's largest and held assets of over \$150,000. It operated until 1869, sharing space with the Bristol-Warren Customs House from 1845 to 1857. Other occupants included the Y.M.C.A., who rented the upper floor from 1863 to 1877, and the Town Clerk, who had an office here during the 1870s. In 1903, the Providence Telephone Company acquired the building for use as the local telephone exchange, converting the first floor into its present configuration as storefront space.

**6****Linden Place**

500 Hope Street (1810)

Linden Place launched the career of local architect Russell Warren. His design for Linden Place incorporates many layers of delicate, decorative motifs. It cost \$60,000 to build – the equivalent of \$1.5 million today. The giant Corinthian portico frames an elegantly recessed doorway with elliptical arches. Four smaller Corinthian columns project forward to support a balcony with balustrade, cornice, and brackets. As was common practice for the time, Warren borrowed these motifs from his pattern book library, which included Asher Benjamin's *Country Builder's Assistant*. Linden Place's owner, George DeWolf, had made his fortune as a slave trader but went bankrupt in 1825 and retreated to his Cuban plantations, plunging Bristol's economy into a twenty-year depression. The property meanwhile remained in the family. George's cousin, William DeWolf, commissioned Warren to add a ballroom on the north side and the octagonal orangery on the south. By 1856, the house had become a hotel, at which time the wrought iron fence was added to the property. The fence is believed to have been moved from the Jerathmael Bowers house in Somerset, MA, and may date to 1815. Located around the grounds are sculptures collected by Samuel Pomeroy Colt during trips to Europe. The Bristol Art Museum occupies galleries on the Wardwell Street side of the grounds. Today, Linden Place is open to the public as a non-profit house museum. (www.lindenplace.org, www.bristolartmuseum.org)

**Point of Interest**

No one at the first Bristol Town Meeting in 1681 was from Bristol, England, although they chose to name the town after Bristol, England, hoping it would become as prosperous a seaport.

7

Colt Memorial High School

570 Hope Street (1906-08/1913)

The Colt Memorial High School is one of only three public schools built of marble in the United States. Samuel Pomeroy Colt, who owned Linden Place at the time, paid for the construction and donated it to the town as a memorial to his late mother, Theodora G. (DeWolf) Colt. Note the Colt family crest in the pediment over the front door.



The Boston architectural firm of Cooper and Bailey designed the school in the American Renaissance style with a central tetra-style Corinthian portico and two-story cast-bronze window bays. The columns are carved from a single block of marble. Today, the building, along with the Andrews School building directly across Bradford Street, provides facilities for the Colt Andrews Elementary School.

8

Andrews School

574 Hope Street (1938/2011)



Following in the footsteps of Samuel Pomeroy Colt, Robert D. Andrews gave the Andrews School to the town as a memorial to his late father, Robert Shaw Andrews, the former Superintendent of the Bristol Public Schools. The Colonial Revival-style building was designed by architect

George Maxwell Cady and originally served, with Colt School as a high school complex. The addition on the east side of the building dates to 2011.

Points of Interest

In 1873, the northernmost mile of Bristol was annexed to and became the southernmost mile of Warren. You can see the old town dividing line on Main Street in Warren, in front of St. Mary of the Bay Church.

Did you know Bristol County, Rhode Island, and Bristol County, Massachusetts, are the only two counties with the same name in the United States that border one another?

17

Second Martin Bennett House

631 Hope Street (1852-55)

The Italianate-style Martin Bennett House may also have been designed by Russell Warren. With its narrow, recessed center bay containing a round-head entrance and tripartite windows on both first and second floors, the house is very similar to the Lemuel W. Briggs House at 117 State Street, a known Warren commission. Martin Bennett was the cashier of the First National Bank of Bristol and later served as Treasurer of the Bristol Institution for Savings.



18

Francis M. Dimond House

617 Hope Street (1838)

The Francis M. Dimond House was the second Greek Revival temple house designed and built by Russell Warren in 1838. Representing the Ionic, the columns support a free-standing pediment that is more typical of Greek temple design. The polygonal Gothic Revival bay on the south side is a later addition, also by Warren. Dimond served as Vice-Counsel at Havana, Cuba, and later at Port-au-Prince, Haiti. He declared bankruptcy one year after the house was completed and sold it to Joseph L. Gardner, merchant and owner of a wharf on Thames Street. Dimond would later go on to purchase and remodel the Bradford/Dimond/Norris House at 474 Hope Street. (See #5)



15

Nicholas Peck House 649 Hope Street (1824)

Nicholas Peck built this house late in the Federal period. Peck was a merchant and ship owner who had done well in Bristol's thriving economy. The overall style and symmetry are typical of the time, but the elliptical fan light over the entrance is a very progressive design element. This motif was possibly created by an architect or taken from a pattern book design.



9

Giles Luther / Charles Bristed Rockwell House 610 Hope Street (1809/c.1850/c.1900)

Ship owner Giles Luther was the first Grand Marshal of Bristol's Fourth of July parade in 1826. His hip-roofed, Federal-style residence is noted for its Palladian window, a round-topped window flanked by two rectangular lights—there are only three such windows in town. The rear ell, front porch, triple arch motif, and Italianate front door, were all later alterations. In 1897, industrialist Charles Bristed Rockwell purchased the house. His daughter, June (Rockwell) Levy left it to the Bristol District Nursing Association in 1915. Today, it is privately owned.



16

Captain Josiah Talbot House 647 Hope Street (1838)

The Josiah Talbot House was one of three designed and built by local architect Russell Warren in 1838. Each house embraced a different one of the Greek orders: the Talbot house used



the Corinthian, the Dimond House (*See #18*) at 617 Hope Street was Ionic, and the former Captain John Fletcher house (no longer standing) represented the Doric. The Talbot house uses a traditional temple form, but sets the two columns in antis, or in line with the side walls of the house. Talbot

was a ship master who owned two brigs and co-owned a schooner. As a cosmopolitan man of the world, he would have appreciated Warren's unusual use of Greek architectural elements.

10

Charles Collins, Jr., House 620 Hope Street (1805)

Appointed as the second Bristol-Warren Customs Officer in 1804, Charles Collins, Jr., built this substantial house one year later. Standing two stories high and five window bays wide, the Federal-style house has a central door topped by a pediment and fan light, paired brick chimneys, and stone quoins. The 50-foot setback from the street was a new trend for its time. Today, the house is owned by Collins' descendants.



11 Benjamin Gardner/Orrin Bosworth House
652 Hope Street (c.1840 /c.1893)

Underneath the wrap-around porch and octagonal tower lies a Greek Revival house built for Benjamin Gardner around 1840. Pedimented, gable-front Greek Revival houses are a common sight

in Bristol, built when the local economy was booming in the early nineteenth century. Around 1893, Orrin Bosworth, a lawyer and judge of the Fifth District Court, added the tower and the porch to bring the house up-to-date with end-of-the-century architectural trends.



12 Charles Greene House
686 Hope Street (1879)

This late Victorian house was built for Charles Greene, who was the owner and publisher of the *Bristol Phoenix* newspaper from 1862-93. Greene was also the first president of the Rhode Island Press Association, Sheriff of Bristol County from 1875-1877, and member of the Bristol Town Council from 1879-1881. His house was no less significant in its extremely fine carved details, octagonal front bay, and side porches, all hallmarks of Victorian architecture. The color scheme is not original, but features the bright colors and painted details that were commonly found on similar houses of the time.



Point of Interest

Bristol experienced a major economic depression in 1825, when George DeWolf went bankrupt. A local was heard to remark, "Now the only bank you can count on is a clam bank!"

13 Captain Parker Borden House
736 Hope Street (1798/1805)

Captain Parker Borden (1764-1842) sailed for the DeWolfs and later in the China trade on behalf of the DeWolf family. He chose this location for his house because it was near his wharf at the foot of Oliver Street. Constructed of wood with symmetrically-placed windows and a central door with Ionic columns and fanlight, the house represented Borden's success as a trade merchant. A two-story ell was added to the rear in 1805. The small bronze plaque at the north-west corner of the house indicates the level of the storm-surge during the Hurricane of September 21, 1938.



—————
☞ —At this point, please return to Oliver Street and cross to the west side of Hope Street. The tour now returns to the Burnside Memorial Hall.

14 Jeremiah Wilson House
675 Hope Street (1751)

John Peckham, a local housewright (house builder), erected this Colonial-style center-chimney house for Jeremiah Wilson in 1751. The pediment and pierced fanlight over the door are of particularly high quality and compare favorably with others in Bristol.

