

**PPS RECORDS FOR
35 BALTON ROAD
PLAT 93, LOT 206**

**SIDNEY A. and EDYTHE O. KANE HOUSE
Built 1949-1950
Architect: Royal Barry Wills
Builders: Nerforth Brothers**

DESCRIPTION:

"A 1-1/2 story, weatherboard-sheathed Cape Cod cottage with a cross gable roof and center chimney. Kane was president of Senak Co. of America."

--Blackstone Realty Plat Historic District National Register Nomination.

The house stands on a 12,559 sq.ft. lot on the east side of Balton Road, between Rochambeau Avenue and Intervale Road. The lot has about 125 feet of frontage and measures 100 feet deep.

HISTORY:

In December 1948, Edythe O. Kane bought a lot of land on the east side of Balton Road from Albert and Roberta Shore (who never lived at the address 35 Balton). Over the next two years, a new house was constructed, designed by Royal Barry Wills, a nationally known Boston architect who specialized in neo-Colonial dwellings and published many books of his designs. (Another Wills house is nearby, the Jacob and Pearl Shore House at 48 Harwich Road. If those Shores were related to the previous owners of this property, that may be how the Kanes came to employ Wills to design their own house.) The address 35 Balton Road first appears in city directories in 1950, as the home of Sidney A. Kane. Mr. Kane is listed as living here until at least 1960. Mrs. Kane remained in residence until 2002; by 1980 she had remarried, to a Samuel J. Winslow, and was then known as Edythe Kane Winslow. This house was acquired by its current owner, Hildberg G. Herbst, in 2003.

DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT:¹

When Providence was first settled in the 17th century, the land north of what is now Rochambeau Avenue was part of the Great Swamp. Several miles away from the populated area of town, fairly inaccessible, and inhospitable to residential development, the Great Swamp was best suited to agricultural uses, and was initially settled by farmers. In 1765, all lands north of Rochambeau Avenue (then called "Herrenden's

¹ Jones, Robert O. *"Historic and Architectural Resources of the East Side, Providence."* R.I. Historical Preservation Commission, 1989.

Lane," later "North Street") were set aside as part of the Town of North Providence, where they remained until 1874.

As the 19th century progressed, the relative isolation and scenic qualities of the Great Swamp made it appealing for country retreats and for institutional uses, such as Butler Hospital and Swan Point Cemetery, but much of the land still remained in agricultural use. In the 1860s, Providence businessman Robert Ives (connected by marriage to the Brown family) purchased a large farm in North Providence at the corner of what is now Rochambeau Avenue and Blackstone Boulevard, and established a house and several greenhouses there.

Meanwhile, in response to Providence's growing economy and population, housing demand increased dramatically after the Civil War, causing many owners of East Side farmlands to plat their properties for residential development. As in many other American cities of the late 19th century, advances in public transportation (street railways, later electric streetcars) made areas outside the city center more accessible for new residential development. At the same time, the suburban ideal of owning a freestanding home in a tranquil, healthful, natural setting had taken root in the popular imagination. To accommodate its growing population, Providence annexed areas of several neighboring communities, including all the land between Rochambeau Avenue and the Pawtucket city line, acquired from North Providence in 1874.

In 1875, Robert Ives's daughter Elizabeth A. I. Gammell came into possession of her father's farm on Rochambeau Avenue. After Blackstone Boulevard was extended along the eastern edge of the farm in 1899, Mrs. Gammell's heirs transferred the farm to a real estate holding company, the Beverly Land Company. Very little housing development occurred on the former farm, however, for more than two decades; by 1902, public streetcars traversed the entire length of Blackstone Boulevard, but utilities (water, sewer, electricity) did not reach this part of Providence until the 1920s.

In 1923 the Blackstone Boulevard Realty Company acquired what remained of Mrs. Gammell's property and, after a land swap with Swan Point Cemetery, recorded the Blackstone Boulevard Realty Plat bounded by Rochambeau Avenue on the south, Elmgrove Avenue on the west and north, and Blackstone Boulevard on the east. The plat included Harwich, Wingate, Westford, Intervale, and Balton Roads, as well as an extension of Cole Avenue. The wide streets, the curvature of Elmgrove Avenue, and the large house lots averaging 8,000-10,000 sq.ft. all reflected a scale geared to automobiles. Development proceeded very quickly, with most houses completed by the 1930s.

DESIGNATIONS

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Blackstone Realty Plat Historic District in 1995. Note that the nomination characterizes the house as "non-contributing," most likely because it was less than 50 years old at the time the

nomination was written. That status should be reconsidered, since the house is now old enough to be considered historic.

Not in any local historic district overlay zone designated by the City of Providence.

RECORDS *(All Records were found in Providence City Hall unless otherwise noted).*

Maps and Atlases (All in Archives unless otherwise noted)

1798: "A Map of Owners of Lots in Providence," compiled by Henry B. Chace in 1912: "Herrenden's Lane to Pawtucket and Swan Point," now Rochambeau Avenue, formed the boundary line between Providence and North Providence. This map does not illustrate the area where Balton Road is now, because in 1798 it was part of the Town of North Providence.

1857: "Map of Providence," by H.F. Walling: "North Street" (now Rochambeau Ave.) formed the boundary line between Providence and North Providence. The area where Balton Road is now is not illustrated, as it was still part of the Town of North Providence in 1875.

1875: "Atlas of the City of Providence," by G.M. Hopkins Co., Vol. 1: Although the area where Balton Road is now was annexed by the City of Providence from the Town of North Providence in 1874, that change is not reflected on this map. "North Street" (as Rochambeau Ave. was then called) was still depicted as the boundary line between Providence and North Providence, and the area where Balton Road is now is not illustrated.

1882: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 10: Shows the city limits of Providence extended north to the Pawtucket city line, so this is the first map of Providence to illustrate the area where Balton Road is now. This map shows East Avenue (now Hope Street) with a plat of house lots called the "East Avenue Plat" on its east side, north of North Street; and also shows Butler Avenue (now Blackstone Boulevard). Between the East Avenue Plat and Butler Avenue is a large, unplatted, vacant lot owned by "Gammell." The lot size is not indicated, but its area visibly larger than an adjacent 21-acre parcel owned by Butler Hospital.

1895: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by Everts & Richards, Plate 13: Shows the East Avenue Plat and Blackstone Boulevard, with two large vacant and unplatted parcels in between, both owned by Elizabeth A. Gammell. The future site of Balton Road is located within a lot of 1,223,626 sq.ft., extending northward from Rochambeau Avenue (the name was changed in 1895); to its north is the second parcel, with 701,696 sq.ft.

1902: Assessors Plat Maps, Plat 93: Shows Lot 206, measuring 1,223,626 sq.ft, on the north side of Rochambeau Avenue, between Hope Street and Blackstone Boulevard. No buildings are depicted on this map.

1908: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by L.J. Richards Co., Plate 10: Shows a large lot of 1,223,626 sq.ft. on the north side of Rochambeau Avenue, between Hope Street and Blackstone Boulevard, owned by the Beverly Land Co. (which also owned the 701,696 sq.ft. parcel immediately to the north).

1918: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 23: Shows a 1,084,065 sq.ft. lot on the north side of Rochambeau Avenue, between Hope Street and Blackstone Boulevard, owned by the Beverly Land Co. (A house lot at the corner of Blackstone and Rochambeau, containing Robert Ives' former home and outbuildings, was subdivided from the larger parcel since 1908.)

1923: "Plat of Land Belonging to Blackstone Boulevard Realty Corp.," surveyed and platted by W.H.G. Temple, October 1923, recorded in Plat Book 35, Page 80, and copied on plat card 1086: Shows the layout of new streets north of Rochambeau Avenue and west of Blackstone Boulevard, including Balton, Intervale, Westford, Wingate, and Harwich Roads, as well as extensions of Cole and Elmgrove Avenues. House lots are not indicated. (*Registry of Deeds*)

1926: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 23: Shows the layout of streets and house lots for the Blackstone Boulevard Realty Corp. Plat (referenced on this map), in the large parcel previously owned by Beverly Land Co. The block bounded by Balton Road, Intervale Road, Cole Avenue and Rochambeau Avenue has not yet been subdivided with house lots; the entire block is owned by Robert B. Dresser and contains 126,371 sq.ft. of land. Water and sewer lines have been laid throughout the plat, and streetcar lines are on Blackstone Boulevard.

1937: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 23: Shows the block bounded by Balton, Intervale, Cole, and Rochambeau subdivided into six house lots, although only two have houses standing on them. The future site of 35 Balton Road is a vacant lot owned by G. Greene, measuring 12,559 sq.ft. This map also references the Blackstone Blvd. Realty Corp. Plat.

By 1955: "Insurance Maps of Providence," by Sanborn Map Co., vol 2. (1921, updated 1929, 1948, 1951, 1955), Plate 99: Shows the house at 35 Balton Road, a 1-1/2 story wood frame building with a roughly T-shaped footprint, with several 1-story additions to the east, west, and south, and a 1-story attached garage at the south end of the house. (This is the current footprint of the house.)

Deeds (Registry of Deeds)

Deed Book 946, Page 364: On December 23, 1948, Albert P. Shore and Roberta L. Shore of Providence sold to Edythe O. Kane of Providence (for an undisclosed sum) a parcel of land "with buildings and improvements thereon" on the east side of Balton Road, with 125 feet of street frontage and 100 feet deep.

[Note: the reference in this deed to buildings is a bit of a mystery, since tax records indicate no assessment to the Shores for buildings on this lot in 1948. But the property was sold very late in 1948, and Mrs. Kane was taxed for a partially completed building in 1949. It is possible that the house was begun while the lot was still owned by the Shores, but in any event it was completed and first occupied by the Kanes, thus the historic name and construction date of 1949-1950.]

Intent to Build Records (Archives)

No records found for 35 Balton Road.

Tax Records (Archives)

Tax records are available from 1827 to the present. Prior to 1854, tax records were published in a book listing the property owner alphabetically by name, the total assessment for any real and personal property (without specifying where real estate was located), and the total tax due. Beginning in 1854, the city kept ledgers (organized by property owner name) indicating the plat and lot number of any real estate and the assessed value and taxes therefor.

- 1948 Albert P. and Roberta L. Shore of 7 Harwich Road owned Plat 93, Lot 206: assessed at \$7,450 for land and \$0 for buildings.
- 1949 Edythe O. Kane of 81 Hazard Avenue owned Plat 93, Lot 206: assessed at \$7,450 for land and \$2,000 for buildings. [This indicates the house was under construction.]
- 1950 Edythe O. Kane of 81 Hazard Avenue owned Plat 93, Lot 206: assessed at \$7,450 for land and \$25,000 for buildings. [This indicates the house had been completed.]

Directories (Archives)

Providence City Directories contain a street directory, noting all existing streets, and a residents' directory organized alphabetically by last name; these also included a house directory, listing residential buildings by street address, from 1892-1894 and again since 1937.

- 1950 35 Balton Road: Kane, Sidney A. [First appearance of this address in directories.]
- 1960 35 Balton Road: Kane, Sidney A.
- 1970 35 Balton Road: Mrs. Edythe O. Kane.
- 1980 35 Balton Road: Samuel J. Winslow.
- 1990 35 Balton Road: Samuel J. Winslow.

- 2000 35 Balton Road: Edythe Winslow.
2002 35 Balton Road: Edythe K. and Sidney A. Winslow.
2003-2004 35 Balton Road: Occupants of this address not listed.
2005 35 Balton Road: Hildburg G. Herbst and Peter H. Herbst.

Assessor's Chain of Title Cards (Assessor's Office)

PLAT 93, LOT 206 – BALTON ROAD

Elizabeth A. Gammell, widow of William, owned the property as of March 1, 1894.
Elizabeth A. Gammell Estate owned the property as of May 1, 1897.
Beverly Land Co. owned the property as of November 1, 1899.
Blackstone Boulevard Realty Corp. owned the property as of November 1, 1923.
Robert B. Dresser owned the property as of November 1, 1924.
George Greene owned the property as of January 1932.
Ruth G. Dresser owned the property as of April 1939.
Abraham Blackman and wife Martha P. Blackman owned the property as of June 15, 1945 (? - date obscured).
Albert P. Shore and wife Roberta L. Shore owned the property as of June 1947.
Edythe O. Kane owned the property as of April 1949.

[No further entries were made on the card after 1949. According to the assessor's data base, however, the current owner is Hildburg G. Herbst, who bought the house from "Edythe Kane Winslow Trustee" in 2003.]

*Research compiled by Kathryn J. Cavanaugh
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