

## History of Improvements, 104 Bowen Street, John Helme Clarke House

### History of renovations, 104 Bowen Street

Constructed in **1848** on present site of Pembroke Dorms – Andrews Hall

Circa **1864** West Bay to house added

**1946** Historic core of house moved up Bowen Street to present location to make way for the construction of Andrews Hall at Pembroke College; the Seven Sisters woman's college which merged in 1970 with Brown University to form the coed institution we know today. The new foundation was poured at 104 Bowen for the home, and house drops installed for sewer and water. Electric utilities were and are delivered through underground conduit. The electric service was delivered at a then whopping 400 amps to accommodate the electrically-heated driveway. One can appreciate the low cost of power in the 1950's by noting the instructions on the now disconnected component servicing the snow-melting driveway: "on in Winter, off in Spring".

The large service copper breakers remain (and exceed today's standards in quality, construction, safety and utility). The meter was replaced in 2015, as previously National Grid and prior thereto Narragansett Electric did not have consumer meters of that size with telemetry for automatic reading. Thus, the meters (water and power) are now read without the need to admit servicemen from the utilities.

**1960's**, the 2-bay, one story garage was added, as was an enclosed breezeway/connector running from the house to the garage.

The house was purchased in **1990** by the Goddard family who undertook substantial renovations. The third floor was augmented by dormers in the West and South bedrooms. A new bathroom was added and central air conditioning was emplaced.

The garage was improved by the addition of a second story artist studio complete with North-facing skylights. The connector was also improved by the addition of a second floor consisting of an upstairs office serviced by several cedar closets, a small lavette and thermal pane windows overlooking the yard. Behind the parking bays of the garage is a heated and air conditioned utility, work and/or storage room with access to the studio above by a quaint spiral staircase and egress to the yard through a separate door. A laundry room was added between the older house and the office.

The present owners purchased the property in **2004**. Substantial landscaping work was completed to sculpt the yard and remove several terminally-diseased trees. Stone walls were repaired, and all of the brick on pathways removed to correct some crowning due to an improperly applied base and non-firmly-seated brick borders. New sand and stone dust beds were emplaced and leveled and the bricks reseated and the seams filled with the proper stone dust.

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Most kitchen appliances were upgraded and replaced. The small oven was removed and the cabinetry on the West-facing wall reworked to accommodate a large double oven system. Disposals were replaced and a trash compactor added.

The studio was wired with premium cabling and acoustics to support the addition of a very substantial surround sound system serviced by premium Sony components. This system is fed by a large capacity amplifier/tuner to support streamed music, DVD movies and HDTV provided by the FIOS optical CATV and internet service delivered right to the house drop.

The uneven and raw brick floor of the mudroom was tiled over. All the rooms were painted and or papered.

All of the lighting fixtures, sconces and chandeliers were replaced in **2004** and **2005**.

In **2013** the exterior of the original house was stripped down to bare wood using a bladed tool certified for lead paint removal by CertaPro, a clear coat primer was laid down and the finish coat applied. A lawn sprinkler system was added and an abatement meter installed to capture and document the water applied to irrigation (as opposed to sent down the sewer, as the sewer charges in Providence key directly to water usage, and all water used is assumed to go down the sewers unless otherwise accounted for by such a meter).

In **2014/2015** the following work was completed. The driveway was repaved in **2014** and in **2015** any micro cracks repaired and the macadam sealed. Masonry repairs to the ½ city block of granite walls and stairs was effectuated by Antonio Fonseca. Cracks were filled and the entirety of the walls and steps were treated with stone cleaner and exposed to high powered pressure washing to restore the slightly coral hue.

Arborists were engaged to trim and prune the two large evergreen trees framing either side of the house frontage. New ground cover was installed on the front beds and the beds abutting the street. The fencing surrounding the property was repaired and painted. The decorative lattice rails on the roof of the third floor were repaired and painted. LED string lights were installed on the third floor roof as an option for evening highlighting.

In late **2014** all angled roofing surfaces were stripped to the framing, any damaged underlying wood replaced and new seal coating emplaced and covered with GAG Timberline Lifetime shingles. All the exterior walls of the newer parts of the house were repainted. In **January of 2016** during the warm spell, the South dormer flat roof was completely removed and replaced.

In **2014**, a new ceramic tile floor was laid in the kitchen and a new floor placed in the den. The fireplace and hearth in the den was improved by Italian marble. A Miele gas cooktop was added as was a new microwave. Wood floors were sanded and refinished. In **2015**, a new 75 gallon gas hot water heater replaced the previous storage unit fed by it's own boiler. This led to more efficient and rapid hot water in a smaller footprint in the utility room.

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In **2015** the walls and ceiling were resurfaced and painted in the main entryway, foyer and staircase. New chandeliers and lighting were hung. New stair covering carpet and runner were installed. New Nest internet-connected, smart thermostats were installed to control the heating systems on the first and third floors.

In late **2015** the gutters were cleaned as were all of the exterior storm and paned windows.