

= Benjamin Church House (Bristol , Rhode Island) =

Benjamin Church House (also known as Benjamin Church Home for the Aged) is a Colonial Revival house at 1014 Hope Street in Bristol , Rhode Island , U.S.A. It opened in 1909 as the " Benjamin Church Home for Aged Men " as stipulated by Benjamin Church 's will . Beginning in 1934 , during the Great Depression , it admitted women . The house was closed in 1968 and became a National Register of Historic Places listing in 1971 . The non @-@ profit Benjamin Church Senior Center was incorporated in June 1972 and opened on September 1 , 1972 . It continues to operate as a senior center .

= = Benjamin Church = =

Benjamin Church was born on February 20 , 1842 , to Elizabeth Luther and Samuel Church , a wealthy grain and flour merchant . Benjamin was raised with his 12 siblings on Mount Hope Farm and the old family farm on Poppasquash . His two brothers built houses in the Poppasquash Farms Historic District . In 1900 , Benjamin Church drafted a will to provide for the construction of a home for elderly men . It opened in 1909 as the " Benjamin Church Home for Aged Men " .

= = Design = =

The Benjamin Church House is a two story clapboarded Colonial Revival topped with a hipped roof that has four pedimented dormers . Constructed between 1908 and 1909 from designs by Clarke , Howe & Homer , architects , the building cost \$ 21 @,@ 000 . The front of the house faces west towards Hope Street and is 18 by 30 feet (5 @.@ 5 by 9 @.@ 1 m) and has an ell on the rear side that measures 18 by 24 feet (5 @.@ 5 by 7 @.@ 3 m) . The front facade has a symmetrical five bay facade with the main entrance in the center , the door has sidelights and a semi @-@ elliptical fanlight . The front windows are typical 20th @-@ century windows with six @-@ over @-@ one sash and have splayed wooden lintels and those on the first floor have raised center keystones . Projecting out from the hipped roof are two dormers with shingled sides . The front facade has a one @-@ story porch that runs the length of the face with a half @-@ hipped roof . The porch is supported by six Doric columns that frame the bays and has a wooden frieze with a triglyph above each column . The porch has a simple wooden rail that runs the length of the porch and down the front and side steps , the newel posts are capped by small wooden urns . The corners of the main part of the house have wooden quoins . In the southeast corner of the building is an internal porch covered by a quarter @-@ hipped roof . The rear roof is are two pedimented dormers , one on each side of the ell 's roof and the third chimney which rises through the roof of the main building . The house has a stone foundation , which extends to a full story due the sloping land and has a doorway in the rear . The porch is supported by brick piers .

The interior of the house is designed around a central hall with a narrow stairway with turned balusters and newel that goes to the third floor . On both sides of the hall are two large front reception rooms , each 14 by 19 feet (4 @.@ 3 by 5 @.@ 8 m) and having 9 feet (2 @.@ 7 m) tall ceilings . The rear of the south front room is the former dining room that is connected by a pantry to the kitchen in the ell . Two small rooms are located beyond the northern reception room . The second floor maintains the central hall and extends into the ell , but is bisected by a lateral hallway . Each " quadrant " housed two rooms for the residents with additional rooms in the ell and the third floor has four additional bedrooms with the dormer windows . The third floor of the ell was used as attic storage space . At the time of nomination to the National Register of Historic Places , the alterations that had been made to the house were described as " minor and inconspicuous , consisting mainly of alterations to windows and dormers to provide egress to necessary fire @-@ escapes . " The porch is believed to be a part of the original design , but it was noted that if it was a later addition it would likely have been done before 1920 . In 1969 , the clapboarded outbuilding to the southeast was torn down to construct newer housing for the elderly .

= = Service = =

The Benjamin Church House was ready to open on March 15 , 1909 and served as elderly housing for only aged men . In 1934 , during the Great Depression , the board of trustees decided to admit women to the house . Samuel P. Colt would bequeath \$ 25 @, @ 000 to the home upon his death in 1921 . The house was closed from 1968 until 1973 and vandalized during the period , but was also submitted and approved to the National Register of Historic Places . Sometime in 1972 , " [t] he Benjamin Church Senior Center was incorporated as a non @-@ profit organization that was housed in [t] he Benjamin Church Home " and opened for occupancy on September 1 , 1972 . According to the Benjamin Church Senior Center , the house is used as a senior center and is run by volunteers and board members .

= = Importance = =

The Benjamin Church House is historically significant as a " very pure example " of the Colonial Revival style by noted local architects Clarke , Howe & Homer . The house also serves as an important asset to the Bristol environment as an elderly home , noted during its vacancy at the time of its nomination . The nomination states " [i] t is because of the environmental and architectural importance of this house and its significance in the greater context of the Bristol @-@ Warren historic districts that it is thought to be worthy of National Register status and protection . " It was added to the National Register of Historic Places on September 22 , 1971 .