



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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One of Rhode Island’s Oldest Houses becomes a Family Home Once Again

Preserve Rhode Island, the state-wide nonprofit committed to preserving Rhode Island’s historic places for future generations, announced at a town meeting in Lincoln on Monday, their plans to return the historic Valentine Whitman House (c. 1696) back into a private residence. A preservation easement, overseen by Preserve RI, will be put on the property, permanently protecting the architectural integrity of the house. The Town of Lincoln transferred ownership of the Valentine Whitman House to Preserve RI in July 2021. Extensive repair and rehabilitation work began immediately and the project is estimated to cost \$600 thousand dollars when complete. With the rehabilitation of the house in the final stages, Preserve RI plans to put the house on the market in June.

The Valentine Whitman House, located on Great Road in Lincoln, is one of the few remaining “Stone Enders” in Rhode Island, an architectural style unique to the state. It is also considered to be unique as both the highest expression of this style in its scale and detail, and also that it has been left substantially unaltered over its 320-year history.

The Town of Lincoln sought ideas for a sustainable future of this former house museum. Without a significant endowment or revenue streams, and faced with the need for substantial investment to stabilize the property, the town turned to Preserve RI for help. Several business models were explored, including unique vacation stays, before deciding that transitioning to a private residence made the most sense. “Selling this important house, with an easement attached, will ensure that a family who appreciates the historic value of this home will love and protect it for generations to come. It will also allow Preserve RI to recoup our investment so we can take on more projects like this in the future. We are proud to help the town of Lincoln find new purpose for this property and set the Valentine Whitman House on a sustainable course for its next 300 years,” said Valerie Talmage, Executive Director of Preserve RI.

The Valentine Whitman House is Preserve RI’s most ambitious Revolving Fund project to date, requiring extensive work to every part of the house. Some of the bigger repairs include:

- A new wood shake roof and new cedar shingles on the sidewalls, covering approximately 75% of the building.
- All new electrical, plumbing and HVAC systems.



- New storm windows and the house and garage painted in a historically appropriate color.
- A custom-designed kitchen, renovated and additional bathrooms, and laundry space were created for 21st Century comforts.
- Original wood floors and plaster walls restored and repaired as needed.

Heritage Restoration, Inc., a premier contractor specializing in old and historic buildings, undertook the rehabilitation project for Preserve Rhode Island. Rob Cagnetta, President of Heritage Restoration, Inc. said, "The Valentine Whitman project is the culmination of a lifetime of work in the greater Rhode Island historic preservation community. Stitching the seventeenth century and an early eighteenth-century remodel with modern technology and amenities requires creativity and flexibility, but with Preserve RI's partnership we believe we struck the right balance."

Preserve RI is grateful for funding for this project made possible through The 1772 Foundation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Ocean State Charities and the sponsorship of Beacon Hill Pole Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution.

About Preserve Rhode Island

Preserve Rhode Island is Rhode Island's statewide advocate for historic places. The 65-year-old nonprofit provides guidance for local preservation groups, finds productive and adaptive reuses for threatened buildings, advocates for the revitalization of historic places to stimulate local economies and engages the community through public programs at Lippitt House Museum.

Images of Valentine Whitman House are available on request.

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