



The Restoration

Construction began in 2014 with the removal of non-historic interior partitions and materials. Historical materials were also temporarily removed to lighten the building for lifting and to gain access to structural components. Later, after the building was made structurally sound and weathertight, the historical materials were reinstalled. As-built drawings and documentary photographs of the building before and during construction assisted craftsmen in the building restoration. In preparation for pouring a new concrete building foundation, the entire structure was lifted into the air eight feet. This undertaking required separating the building into components, which would be lifted one at a time. Once the entire building was lifted off its old stone foundations, a new concrete slab foundation was installed. Then the building was lowered onto the new foundation with each component lowered individually and matched to its adjoining component. The operation, undertaken during the winter of 2014/15, required tremendous skill and calculation. Once re-positioned, the building on its new foundation stands 2 feet higher off the ground than before. This allows for some flood prevention and future storm resiliency. The building is within a special flood hazard zone for coastal flooding. The building frame was also substantially strengthened to resist severe storm damage.

During 2015, the building was carefully rehabilitated and restored to historic preservation standards under the watchful eye of the architectural team, the building craftsmen, and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission. Character-defining features and spaces have been carefully restored while allowing for new adaptive uses and health and safety code upgrades. The historic windows remaining on the third floor and in the stable areas on the ground floor were restored. The original central barn doors on the front façade were restored and rehung. The large northwestern barn wing space was given a new life as a community gathering space named for Chaplin Bradford Barnes, the founding executive director of the on the Watch Hill Conservancy and an advocate for conservation of Watch Hill's natural resources and historic properties. The Lanphear Livery restoration project was finished in 2016.

