CITY OF CRANSTON

Garden City

National Register of Historic Places Nomination

PUBLIC MEETING #1

City of Cranston
Planning Department

Beth Ashman, Director of Planning

Brianna Valcourt, Senior Planner

Subrecipient + Project Manager

Presentation Overview & Roles



CITY OF CRANSTON

Why this project, why now

Local purpose · funding · public process



RHODE ISLAND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION & HERITAGE COMMISSION

How the National Register works

Program basics · eligibility · what listing means



PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY LABORATORY

How Garden City will be documented

Fieldwork · research · methodology · schedule

The National Register of Historic Places

20,616+

PROPERTIES IN RHODE ISLAND

11

DISTRICTS IN CRANSTON

12

INDIVIDUALLY-LISTED PROPERTIES IN CRANSTON

Official federal list

Recognizes buildings, structures, objects, sites, and historic districts. Maintained by the National Park Service and administered in Rhode Island by RIHPHC.

Cranston Examples of NR Listings

- **Edgewood Historic District**
- **Pawtuxet Village Historic District**
- **Governor Sprague Mansion**
- **Rhodes-on-the-Pawtuxet Ballroom and Gazebo**
- **Edgewood Yacht Club**

WHAT LISTING MEANS

Recognition vs Restriction

LISTING DOES

Recognize significance

Formal acknowledgment at the local, state, or national level.

Create eligibility

Owners may be eligible for financial incentives, including grants, assistance, and preservation tax credits..

LISTING DOES NOT

Change property rights

Does not restrict private property owners from making changes to their properties, nor does it automatically increase property taxes.

Add regulatory requirements

Does not require review by the local Historic District Commission, or obligate owners to preserve or restore their properties.

National Register listing is primarily recognition and documentation.

History in the Present



History in the Present

GARDEN CITY

has reached a moment when it can be evaluated as history—not just memory.

01 UNDERSTAND THE PAST

A careful nomination provides a lasting public benefit and a durable foundation for future planning—without requiring the neighborhood to remain unchanged.

02 BUILD ON MOMENTUM

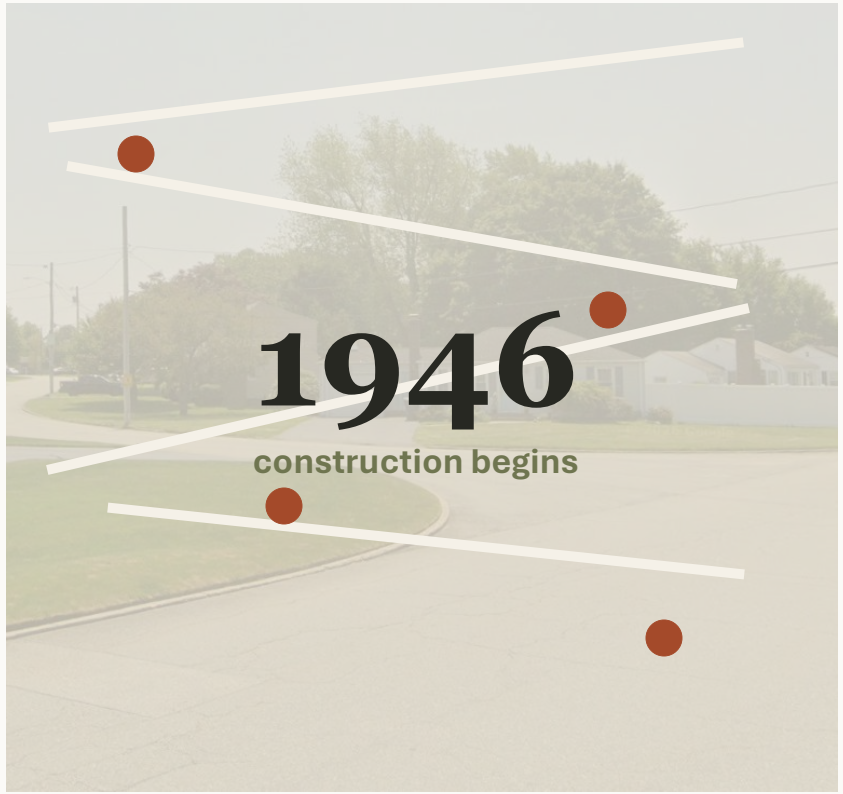
PAL's 2022 survey and the Certified Local Government grant provide the City with a foundation to advance the National Register nomination.

03 GUIDE THE FUTURE

The neighborhood's architectural and social history becomes part of the public story to help residents and decision-makers understand what is distinctive as Garden City evolves.

Recognition is about making future decisions with a fuller understanding of place.

Postwar Planning is Visible



An early planned postwar community

Garden City responded to demand for housing and a changing vision of suburban life after World War II, offering a distinctive perspective on how everyday life could be centered close to home.

Homes + commerce + community

Winding streets and landscaped lots were planned alongside apartments, shops, a church, and a school—an integrated “city within a city.”

A TEAM IS FORMED

CLG Grant Award

✓ 1 · FUND + DEFINE THE WORK

JAN 2025 · GRANT APPLICATION

The City seeks funding from RIHPHC to hire a preservation consultant. Funding provided through the Historic Preservation Fund by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, and administered by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission.

JAN 2026 · GRANT AWARD

RIHPHC defines the project scope, schedule, and responsibilities.

✓ 2 · PROCURE + MOBILIZE CONSULTANT

Competitive negotiation: the City publicizes an RFP and evaluates at least three qualified proposals.

MAY	RFP issued
JUNE	Three bids received
JUNE–JULY	City and RIHPHC review qualifications
JULY	Board of Contract and Purchasing awards PAL
SEPTEMBER	PAL begins CLG grant project work

SCOPE OF WORK

CLG Grant Team

RIHPHC → City of Cranston → PAL

RIHPHC

GRANT ADMINISTRATOR + REVIEWER

- Set funding agreement
- Review consultant qualifications
- Authorize contract execution
- Review progress, reimbursement requests, and the nomination
- Present nomination to State Review Board and submit to National Park Service

City of Cranston

SUBRECIPIENT + PROJECT MANAGER

- Runs procurement
- Manages the contract schedule
- Coordinates review
- Submits reports

PAL

QUALIFIED CONSULTANT

- Field inspection + photography
- Historical research
- Prepares the NR documentation
- Hold project meetings
- Submit nomination

END DELIVERABLE

A complete and approved National Register nomination for the Garden City Historic District.

WELCOME, RIHPHC + PAL

Thank you for the expertise you are bringing to Garden City.

Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission

Mary Kate Harrington, Senior Architectural Historian

Donna Alqassar, Senior Historic Grants Manager

Grant Administrator + Reviewer

The National Register of Historic Places

The Official List of the Nation's Historic Places Worthy of Preservation

A NATIONAL PROGRAM MANAGED LOCALLY

- Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
- Administered by the National Park Service (NPS), in cooperation with **State Historic Preservation Offices** like RIHPHC
- Part of a **national program** to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources

RI MUNICIPALITIES

Barrington	84	New Shoreham	49
Bristol	1142	Newport	3597
Burrillville	301	North Kingstown	892
Central Falls	307	North Providence	69
Charlestown	64	North Smithfield	264
Coventry	334	Pawtucket	395
Cranston	**928**	Portsmouth	17
Cumberland	288	Providence	6518
East Greenwich	694	Richmond	146
East Providence	321	Scituate	307
Exeter	10	Smithfield	98
Foster	147	South Kingstown	383
Glocester	132	Tiverton	46
Hopkinton	218	Warren	417
Jamestown	122	Warwick	357
Johnston	33	West Greenwich	3
Lincoln	490	West Warwick	13
Little Compton	34	Westerly	818
Middletown	23	Woonsocket	449
Narragansett	106	TOTAL:	20,616

National Register Properties

OVER 20,000 RESOURCES LISTED

National Register-listed properties in RI include colonial houses, farms, factory villages, diners, archaeological sites, landscapes, monuments, military bases, seacoast villages, suburban neighborhoods, and much more.

Generally, properties must be **at least 50 years old**, though younger properties can qualify if exceptionally significant.

*#s are included for illustrative purposes only

What Makes a Property Significant?

Level of Significance:

- Local
- State
- National

LEVEL = geographic scope of listing
CRITERIA = used to evaluate the property

01 CRITERION A

Associated with **events** that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

02 CRITERION B

Associated with the **lives of persons significant** in our past

03 CRITERION C

Embodies the **distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction** or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values

04 CRITERION D

Has yielded, or is likely to yield, information **important in prehistory or history**

Ability to Convey Historical Significance

LOCATION
Place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred

DESIGN
Combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property

SETTING
Physical environment of a historic property

MATERIALS
Physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property

WORKMANSHIP
Physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory

FEELING
Property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

ASSOCIATION
Direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property

Properties must demonstrate **integrity** in the above areas.

PROCESS

How Do properties Get Listed?



Submitted by property owners, municipalities, local preservation orgs, consultants



Reviewed by RIHPHC staff and State Board of Review



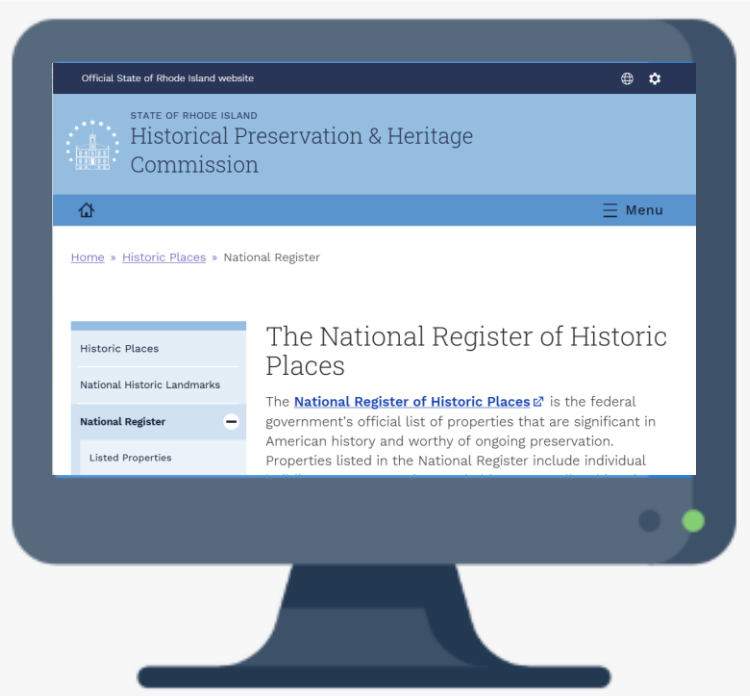
Completed nominations submitted by RIHPHC to NPS for final review and listing

MORE INFO AVAILABLE

National Register of Historic Places

INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

Visit: https://preservation.ri.gov/historic-places/national-register



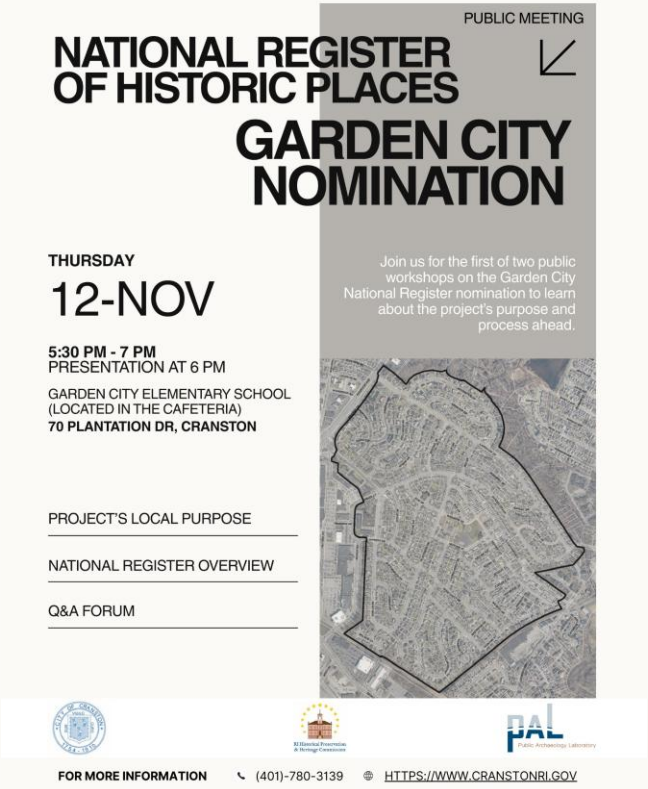
The Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc.

Laura Kline, Senior Architectural Historian

Jillian A. Miller, Landscape Historian

Project Consultant

Project Schedule



3 · CURRENT WORK

NOVEMBER 2026	Finalize district boundary with City and RIHPHC
APRIL 2027	Submit draft nomination to City and RIHPHC for review and comment
MAY 2027	Second public meeting
JULY 2027	Submit final nomination to City and RIHPHC

PAL Workflow

STARTING POINT

Historic Survey 2022-23

- Comprehensive architectural survey of neighborhood (285 acres, 907 properties)
- Fieldwork and research
- Report: narrative history and context, discussion of architectural styles/forms
- Proposed district boundary
- Summary statement of National Register eligibility

FIELDWORK & RESEARCH

Refine District Boundary

- Historic plat maps, aerials, documents
- Visual assessment of architecture
- Community input

FINAL PRODUCT

National Register Nomination

- WHAT? Detailed narrative description of district with current photographs and contributing and non-contributing resource counts
- WHY? Narrative statement of significance with supporting historical context
- Administrative information, maps, etc.

Post-WWII Suburban Design

Community Planning And Development

- Intact and rare example of a builder-designed postwar suburb in Rhode Island
- Garden City Builders, Inc. under the direction of Nazzareno Meloccaro and his son, Robert Meloccaro, operated as the builder-developer
- Responsible for all elements of design and implementation, including platting of development, sale of the lots, and construction
- Before WWII, the average contractor built fewer than five houses a year. By 1949, approximately 70% of all new houses were built by only 10% of all contractors in the country.
- This trend persisted throughout the mid-20th century and defines suburbs from the era
- Garden City served as a model for other mid- and late 20th-century suburbs in the state


N. Meloccaro

Announces the Official Opening of

GARDEN CITY

Development and Administration Building

Thursday, September 2nd

At 21 Garden City Drive, Cranston

OPEN DAILY 9 to 5 P.M.
Or By Appointment

You are cordially invited to inspect Rhode Island's newest, self-contained, residential development. We also urge you to visit the efficient new administration building. Here complete information concerning architectural, building and financing service is available to every prospective home buyer. An illustrated booklet describing the development is also available here without obligation.

GARDEN CITY, considered by experts to be one of the finest developments in New England, will include:

- Scores of Modern Apartments
- Over 600 Homes for All Incomes (Some Already Being Built)
- A superbly convenient, 18 acre shopping center.

For easier recognition, during the construction of the new development the name R. I. Home Builders, Inc. (under which Mr. Meloccaro has built several large developments) will be changed to Garden City Builders, Inc.

SEE GARDEN CITY ILLUSTRATED in colored movies at Booth 59 At The HOME SHOW, Sept. 7 thru 11.

GARDEN CITY BUILDERS, Inc.

UNDER SUPERVISION OF N. MELOCCARO

21 Garden City Drive, Cranston — Williams 6600

Phases

What we know as “Garden City” is actually five distinct subdivision plats orchestrated by different developers during the early to mid-20th century.

However, Garden City Builders, Inc. played an important role in defining the neighborhood’s prevailing characteristics:

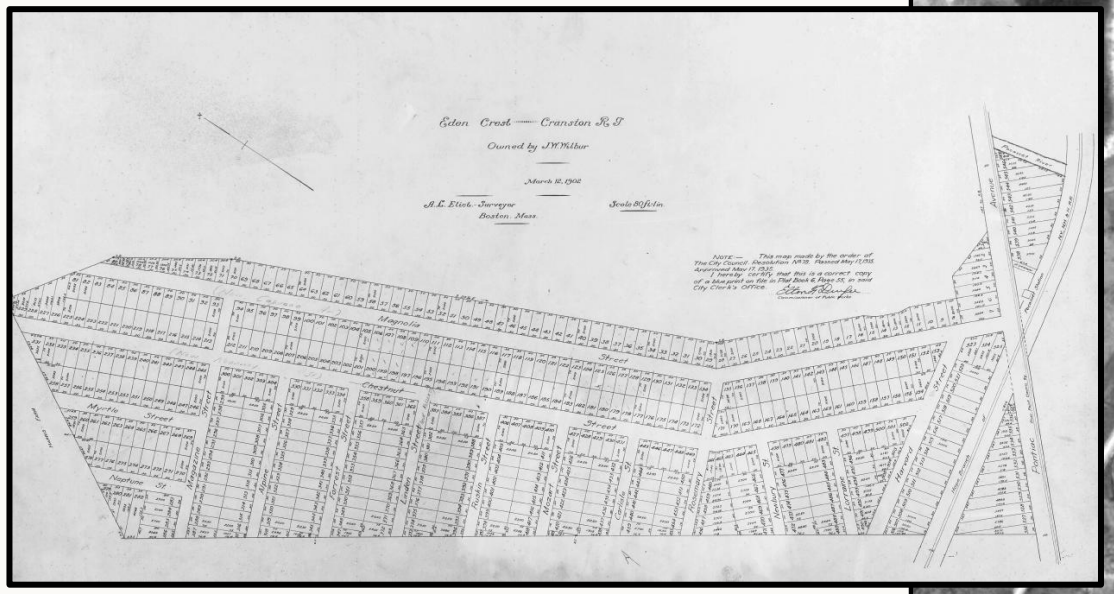
- Curvilinear drives
- Regular setbacks and parcel sizes
- Similar and compatible house designs
- Automobile-forward layout
- Predominantly residential with some civic, religious, and commercial properties



Phases

Eden Crest Plat (1902)

- Subdivided by J. W. Wilbur in 1902
- Few parcels developed before WWII
- Sold to individual developers and builders in mid-20th century

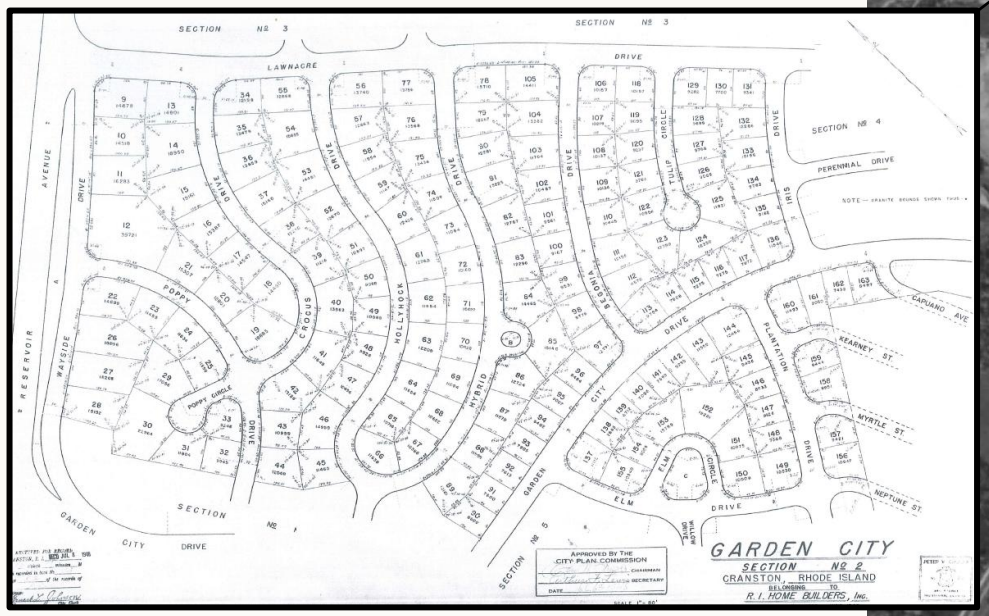


1939

Phases

Garden City (1947–1951)

- Developed by RI Home Builders, Inc., which became Garden City Builders, Inc. in 1948
- Constructed in five phases



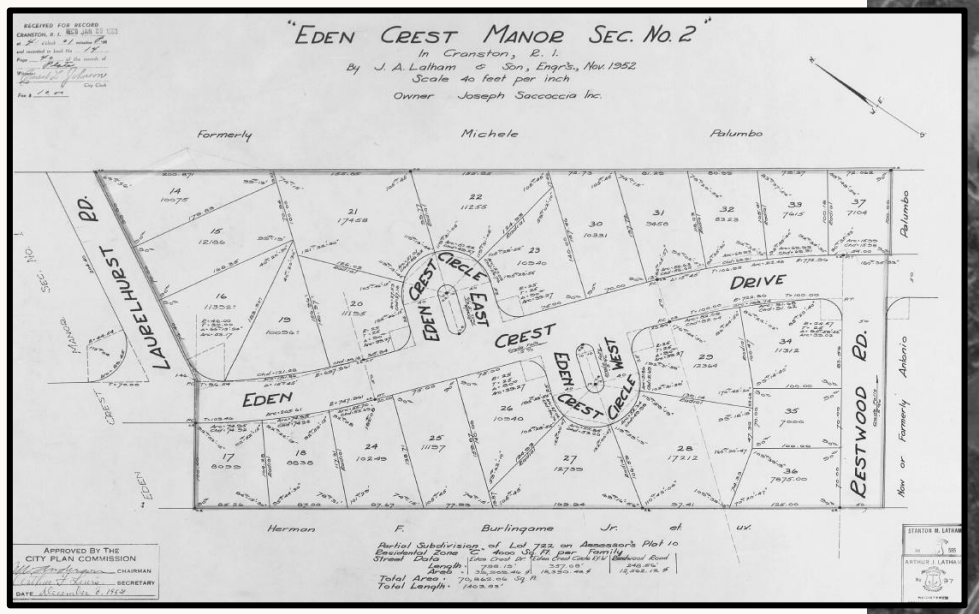


1951/2

Phases

Eden Crest Manor (1952–57)

- Formerly part of the Michele Palumbo Farm
- Developed by Joseph T. Saccoccia (his wife Lily Storti was a niece of Michele Palumbo)
- Built slowly in five phases





Phases

Dellwood Manor (1953)

- Formerly owned by Herman Burlingame, who operated a small airfield there
- Developed by Atlantic Realty Co. and James J. Lombardi





Phases

Garden City Elementary School (1954)

- Land acquired between 1950 and 1954
- Replaced in 2022





Phases

Garden Crest (1963–67)

- Formerly part of Michele Palumbo Farm; the 1909 farmhouse remains at 65 Harvard Street
- Developed by Michele Palumbo's daughter Eleanor and her husband Frank Palumbo
- Several houses built for members of Palumbo family



Post-WWII Architecture

Architecture

- Cohesive collection of suburban post-WWII architecture, consisting primarily of single-family houses, with apartments and a handful of civic, social, and religious buildings
- Most of the houses were built in the Postwar Suburban style in a variety of types including the cape, minimal traditional, ranch, and split-level encouraged by the FHA and are represented in postwar suburbs throughout the United States
- Home buyers could choose specific finishes from materials approved by Garden City Builders
- Apartment houses are two-story brick buildings that allowed families and couples who either could not afford or did not want a freestanding single-family house to enjoy suburban living
- Most of the buildings retain their original massing, form, and style with few intrusive alterations
- Very little demolition or infill construction



Building Types and Styles: Postwar Suburban

Ranch



195 POPLAR DR (1950)



46 EDEN CREST DR (1952)

Split-level



70 KEARNEY ST (1962)



52 POPLAR DR (1960)

Cape Cod



33 BEGONIA DR (1949)



59 JUNIPER DR (1951)

Building Types and Styles: Colonial Revival

Colonial Revival



42 BEGONIA DR (1949)



35 EDEN CREST DR (1952)

Garrison



36 REDWOOD DR (1955)



39 POPPY DR (1951)

Building Types and Styles: Mid-Century Modern

Mid-Century Modern



31 GARDEN CITY DR (1948)



9 GARDEN CT (1957)



ST MARKS CHURCH, 9 GARDEN CT (1950)

Building Types and Styles: Late 20th Century

Raised Ranch



164 HARVARD ST (1971)

Contemporary



36 CROCUS DR (1984)

Neocolonial



66 HOLLYHOCK DR (1985)

CITY OF CRANSTON

Thank You

Now Welcoming Questions & Discussion

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