THE HISTORIC JEWELRY DISTRICT

Fascinating Past, Promising Future

Residences once lined our streets, and sailing ships docked at the end of Ship Street. One of the last houses still standing in the District (137 Chestnut) belonged to Providence Mayor Thomas A. Doyle and his sister Sarah (a founder of RISD and Pembroke College), built in 1824.

Industry began moving in during the early 1800s. The earliest remaining factory, the 1848 Phenix Iron Foundry, a maker of machinery for the textile industry remains, handsomely restored, at the corner of Elm and Hospital.

When the Civil War ended, small jewelry manufacturers began moving in, and as they prospered, built ever-larger factories. Today, their buildings trace the history of industrial architecture in America.

The jewelry industry vanished, but its factories found productive new lives: Imperial Knife is loft apartments and offices. Speidel Co., famous for Twist-o-Flex watchbands, is the Brown’s Dept. of Molecular Biology. Little Nemo Manufacturing Co. houses Brown’s Warren Alpert Medical School. Coro Co., once the leading U.S. maker of costume jewelry, is now a Lifespan health center. A defunct power plant just reopened as a joint RI College/URI nursing school and Brown University administrative offices.

Where once an interstate sliced through Providence, construction has begun on a planned million sq. ft. complex with offices, labs, a conference center and a hotel. A large residential complex is slated for Friendship St. Johnson & Johnson has opened a research unit and a medical innovation center is renovating adjoining space.

The future is here today in the historic Jewelry District.

THE JEWELRY DISTRICT ASSOCIATION

The JDA is a dedicated group of volunteers with a common goal: as the District moves into an exciting era of new development, maintain a respect for the past and encourage a mixed-use future that blends new and old.

Today’s District offers unique qualities as a place to live, work and play; we envision a rich future in a walkable, bikeable, livable environment that’s welcoming for business and residents alike.

JDA committees work actively together with the city, developers, the 195 Redevelopment Commission, businesses and colleges on everything from long-range planning, zoning and design review to nightlife, tree-planting and other quality of life issues.

Want to get involved in the next phase in our neighborhood’s development? Come to a JDA monthly meeting – they’re open to the public.

For more information and upcoming meeting schedule, visit our website: JewelryDistrict.org
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Designed by Mad Creative, a graphic design studio operating in the Jewelry District for over 17 years.
More than ever, a great place to live and work. New loft-style apartments have opened, and more are on the way. The nursing school is in session, an innovation center is under construction and a hotel is in planning stages. Soon, the District will have a new riverside park and a pedestrian bridge to the East Side.

You can find it in the jewelry district

For current District news and events and to explore its rich history, go to www.jewelrydistrict.org

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