



THE CITY OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND – AMERICA’S FIRST RESORT  
Department of Planning, Zoning, Development & Inspections

MEMORANDUM

To: Peter Friedrichs, City Planner  
From: Helen Johnson, Preservation Planner  
Subject: Review of Demolition Proposal: 9 Lee’s Wharf, Plat 32, Lot 253  
Date: August 1, 2019

**Finding of Facts:**

1. 9 Lee’s Wharf is a 2-story wood frame house with a side-gabled roof and central chimney.
2. 9 Lee’s Wharf is listed as a contributing building in the Southern Thames National Register Historic District. It is not located within the Newport Local Historic District.
3. The foundation of the existing structure is cinder block. The windows consist of mismatched styles, most if not all of which are replacements. A deck has been added to the second floor West elevation. A one story wood shingled addition with rubber roof spans the East elevation’s first floor. The roof is asphalt and the siding is wood shingle.
4. A door surround consisting of a broken ogee pediment with fluted columns can be found on the West elevation. This is commonly found in late 19<sup>th</sup> century Colonial Revival era structures.
5. The nominating papers for the Southern Thames Historic District states the following:  
“9 Lee’s Wharf: House (circa 1890 et seq.): A shingled 2-story, end-gable-roof house with one story shed –roof section along the east elevation, second-story deck supported by wood piers on the west elevation, irregular fenestration, and small chimney centered on the ridgeline. By the early 1920s this was the home of carpenter John Collon”
6. The Southern Thames National Register Historic District is described in its National Register nominating papers stating,  
“The Southern Thames Historic District is set in the port city of Newport on a west sloping, harborside location. It includes a large neighborhood divided into a grid of narrow lots by two major north-south arteries, Thames Street and Spring Street, and by many cross streets running east-west up the hill from the waterfront. Historically a mostly working-class Irish neighborhood (though dating back in its origins to the 17th century), the Southern Thames area flourished and expanded between 1850 and 1920, experienced a stable period in the mid-20th century, until once again it became a desirable neighborhood in the 1980s. Physically, the area’s building stock is overwhelmingly late-19th-century—compact, unassuming, cohesive. The district is divided into three areas: a residential area, the Thames Street commercial corridor, and the waterfront. The waterfront area is set on a comb of wharves jutting into Newport Harbor, and includes warehouses, mill buildings, open storage yards and parking lots—a collection of large and small buildings both new and old, vacant lots, and narrow alleys oriented to the harbor. The Thames Street commercial corridor is lined with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century, mostly wood-frame, two-and-a-half- and three-and-half-story structures that

form cohesive walls along the street edge... Between this linear business district and Newport Harbor is a section of the city's old waterfront characterized by a variety of warehouse buildings, harbor-side restaurants, vacant pockets of land, and utility stations, all on historic 18th-century wharves, and set near impressive early-19th-century textile mill buildings. During the summers, the wharves are busy with the coming and going of sail and motor vessels.

7. The National Register Criteria upon which this nomination is based are:

**Criteria A.** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

and

**Criteria C.** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction

**Staff Comments:**

This property is likely listed as contributing based on Criteria A; throughout its existence the property has been lived and worked in by Newport locals. Other than the existing West elevation door surround, the building in question lacks any significant character defining features. The demolition of this structure will not result in the loss of a distinctive type, period, or method of architecture nor will it result in the loss of the work of a master. The applicant has sufficiently documented this structure through photographs and by providing a thorough architectural description and chain of title report.