Self-guided walking tour: “GREEK TEMPLES” IN PROVIDENCE

What is a (Greek) temple?

- houses the statue of the god or goddess
- place of worship
- place of offerings and sacrifices
- would usually have an altar in ancient Greece
- the most sacred part where the god’s statue is: naos or cela (inner room)
- comes from the word ναός meaning “temple”
- the temple usually is part of a larger sacred complex (temple precinct)
• Emergence of temples in Ancient Greece: between 9th and 6th ce. BC
  Archaic and Classical Greece: 1100-4th ce BC

• After the collapse of the palatial cultures in the Mediterranean, we see the rise of city states (polis) on mainland Greece. Palatial/royal art is gone, but on mainland Greece new artistic forms and styles in pottery, sculpture, and architecture appear.

• Earliest temples are made of mud brick and wood, more in the style of a house

See metope and triglyph below.

• Early Greek temple plans were inspired by the megaron plan found in Bronze Age palaces and domestic architecture in the Aegean.
STOP 1/HAFFENREFFER MUSEUM OF ANTHROPOLOGY (Manning Hall)

- Stone temples emerge in Greece around 6th ce.
  Archaic example: Temple of Aphaia at Aegina (570 BC)
  Classical example: Parthenon at Acropolis (438 BC)

- Temple orders: Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian order
  The most defining element of these orders are the column capitals.

- The metope and triglyph design in the frieze comes from a structural element of the wooden architecture/wooden temples. These are basically the beams and structural support sticking out between the roof and the walls of the structure.
- Manning hall columns are in the Doric order.
Manning Hall

- Built in 1834 at the expense of Nicholas Brown and named at his request for President Manning
- The third building erected on Brown campus, is built of stone
- Designed by architect James C. Bucklin, who also designed RI Hall (1840) and the Arcade (1828)
- Designed as a double-sized replica of the Doric order temple of Diana-Propylea in Eleusis

- Originally housed the university's first free-standing library and its chapel. Later, the building served as a museum of classical antiquities, an architectural drawing studio, and an undergraduate lecture space.
- In 1959, the upper floor was returned to its original role as the University's chapel, after a hiatus of 65 years. Currently, Manning Hall houses the Haffenreffer Museum of Anthropology's exhibitions and Manning Chapel.

For more information:

• JCB Library is in **Ionic order**: is characterized by its volute capitals, with egg-and-dart motifs in between the volutes, and a column base that is between the column shaft and the platform.

![Egg-and-dart](image)

• JCB’s Ionic columns have palmette decoration in between the volutes instead of egg-and-dart.

• The word “Ionic” comes from a region in ancient Greece called Ionia, which was the western coast coast of today’s Turkey. “Doric” similarly is a region name on mainland Greece.

• Temples were often decorated. Sculptural and relief decorations were placed along the frieze, on the pediment, or inside of it. The pediment which is a triangular space, commonly had mythical scenes of heroes, god, and goddesses.

• JCB is decorated very much like a Greek temple, except it does not have any pedimental sculpture. Instead it is adorned with **acroteria** (singular: *acroterion*), which translates to "summit" or "extremity" in Greek. These were decorations reliefs or
statues placed at the top of the temple. One of the most common figures used as an acroterion was Nike the goddess of victory. An example of a Nike acroterion was found at the Temple of Apollo at Delphi (6th century BCE).

- History of JCB: its origins go back to a time when systematic book collecting around a historical theme was a rarity. Although the Brown family had been acquiring books since early in the eighteenth century, the present collection was not fully launched until the mid-nineteenth century when John Carter Brown (1797–1874) began avid pursuit of Americana, an area of interest he termed “the Great Subject.”

- The will of John Carter Brown (son of Nicholas Brown) directed that within four years of his death, his trustees were to establish the collection, together with a building to house it, at a permanent site of their choice.

- 50,000 books written about both North and South America until roughly the end of the colonial era in the Americas, as well as around 16,000 specialized reference books providing supplementary information about the Library’s holdings. The Library also holds a major collection of prints, manuscripts, and maps of the New World.
- Opened in 1904, designed by Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge
The Atheneum takes its name from Goddess Athena: goddess of wisdom, knowledge, military strategy.

She is one of the 12 Olympians (gods and goddesses): are the major deities of the Greek pantheon: Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Demeter, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Aphrodite, Hephaestus, Hermes, and either Hestia or Dionysus.

Athena was born from Zeus’ head. Athena was also considered the patron goddess of the city of Athens. There is a very important sanctuary and temple dedicated to her on the Acropolis in Athens. The temple of Athena on the Acropolis is known as the “Parthenon” referring to Athena Parthenos (Athena the Virgin). Atheneum, just like the Parthenon sits on an acropolis (College Hill).

As in other Greek temples, a statue of the god or goddess to whom the temple was dedicated, would reside in the naos. Some of these statues were colossal, meaning larger than life-size. Today, if you go to Nashville, you can see a statue of Athena inside the replica of the Parthenon.
History of the Atheneum in Providence: In 1753, a group of private citizens started The Providence Library Company to gain access to a collection of books that they could not afford individually. Members paid a small subscription fee to the library to purchase books which all members could share. The building itself was built on land donated by Moses Ives Brown and his family. It is the only New England building designed by the renowned Philadelphia architect, William Strickland. In 1758, a fire destroyed the majority of the first collection of books, which were then housed at the Providence court house.

When Brown University moved from Warren to Providence in 1770, the library offered students the use of its books. In 1836, the Providence Library Company merged with the Providence Atheneum (founded in 1831), and the merged organization became known as the Providence Athenaeum.

Author H.P. Lovecraft was not a member of the library, but he lived nearby on College Street; he frequented the library and wrote about it in his letters and stories. Edgar Allen Poe is known to have visited the Atheneum, too. Some even say that he got drunk on the stairs. In September of 1848, he traveled to Providence in order to meet and court the wealthy Rhode Island widow, Sarah Helen Whitman.

Outside the building there is a Neo-classical with gothic fountain. A 19th ce. legend says that visitors who drink the water will always return to Providence.

more information: https://providenceathenaeum.org/about/history/
STOP 4/OLD STONE BANK

- On your way to the Old Stone Bank note the columns of the Licht Judicial Complex. These columns and the columns at the entrance of the Old Stone Bank is in an order that we have not seen so far: **Corinthian order**.

  ![Old Stone Bank, Providence](image)

- Corinthian order is the last one of these orders (around 5th ce. BCE). Its name comes from the city of Corinth on mainland Greece. Corinthian columns are known for their ornately carved capitals, which imitate acanthus plants.

- This order is known from the Greek world and it was very popular in the Roman world.

- Roman temples and religion in general have a lot of commonalities with Greek temples and religious elements. The gods and goddess we discussed before take different (Latin) names but continue their main characteristics. Zeus becomes Jupiter, Athena becomes Minerva, and Aphrodite becomes Venus. Architecture similarly uses Classical/Greek features with changes in materials (in addition to marble, Roman temples can be made of travertine and cement too).
• An important innovation during the Roman period is the use of arches and domes. Here at the Old Stone Bank, we are looking at a dome that is placed on top of a granite building. The structure itself and the dome from the outside and inside imitates some features of the Roman Pantheon temple.

• The Pantheon was a temple dedicated to all gods (“pan”: all, “theos”: god), commissioned and completed by different Roman emperors in AD 126. It is a round structure (rotunda) with a Greek temple facade of Corinthian columns.

• Pantheon’s concrete dome was the world’s largest unreinforced concrete dome for centuries. The rectangular panels (coffers) made the weight of the dome lighter. The middle of the dome was open to the sky to let sunlight in and it was called the “oculus” (eye) of the dome. Pantheon 360: https://vimeo.com/195934650
• One can see similar features inside the Old Stone Bank at events like weddings, however, the oculus is covered with glass.

“Old Stone Bank” or Providence Institution for Savings: was established in 1819. The granite edifice with a distinctive gold leaf, spired dome was designed by C.J. and R.J. Hall in 1854.

• It was sold to Brown University in 1995 to house Native American collection for Haffenreffer Museum, but was found unfit (as the necessary alterations would have altered the historic character of the building). In April 2009 Brown sold the building to Gold Dome Properties, LLC for $2.14 million.

On your way to the Arcade note:
• Memorial park, WWI and WWII memorials and the columns
• Risd Library facade: half/engaged columns
• The Turks’ Head Building’s exterior columns

What order are these columns?
STOP 5/THE ARCADE

• The Arcade’s facade has six Ionic order columns. It was built in 1828. The Arcade is the first enclosed shopping mall in the United States. It reopened in 2013.
• The Arcade is a fine example of commercial Greek Revival architecture in the US.

• What is Neo-classical and Greek-revival architecture? Both of these architectural styles, which emerged during the 18th and early 19th centuries, were influenced by Classical Greek architecture. Neo-classical movement was concerned with the logic of entire Classical volumes, proportions, measurements, etc. whereas Classical revivalism or Greek-revival used Classical Greek elements such as columns and decorative features.
• One of the common characteristics of the stops of our tour is that all of these buildings are public, commercial, educational, or governmental structures. Why are Greco-Roman elements used in creating such buildings?
• Ideals of western civilization associated with Greek and Roman past?
• Aesthetic ideals as “classical beauty”?
• Authoritative/old/important look, or the monumentality? (example: the White House)

Other similar Greek-revival or Greek-influenced buildings in Providence: RI Capital Building, Benefit Street Houses, John Hay Library, Providence Public Library, Providence City Hall and many others.

Greek revival architecture in America, Talbot Hamlin (1944) : “However it was in the smallest of the New England states, Rhode Island, that the Greek Revival was perhaps most successful and its monuments most notable”.

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