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Arch1900: Site Report  
September 19, 2012

*Archaeology of College Hill Proposal  
The Brown University Faculty Club  
1 Magee Street*

The physical campus of Brown University on the East Side of Providence had very humble beginnings in University Hall and the small line of buildings that extended from both sides; Manning Hall, Hope College, Slater Hall, and Rhode Island Hall. Since 1770, the Brown campus has expanded substantially from a small plot of land bought for the construction of these first few buildings to a large university composed of not only newly constructed buildings but also acquired houses from the adjacent neighborhoods (Burlingame 5). Focusing our study on this steady growth and change will provide insight into the history of Brown as well as its surrounding community. Historically and archaeologically, I believe that it would be interesting and beneficial to examine the constantly evolving relationship between the university and its neighbors as well as the ongoing process of transforming private property into university property. These types of spaces that once belonged to private families but now belong to the university are spaces of both constant use and multiple use, therefore they could potentially yield a high volume of material culture as well as a continuous archaeological record.

More specifically, the Faculty Club property at 1 Magee Street is a promising site for future archaeological survey and excavation. The house sits on the boundary of the Brown campus however is still quite close to the Main Green and the original buildings that have ties to the deep history of Brown. The house is a large three story, brick building with a small surrounding yard. It was originally owned by Zachariah Allen, a

successful Providence wool manufacturer, and was designed and built by Alfred Stone in 1864. In 1878, William Ely, a graduate of Brown, bought the house. While many East Side properties were gifted to the university, the Zachariah Allen Mansion was actually bought by the university from William Ely in 1938 and was immediately made into the new home of the Faculty Club (Burlingame 15). The idea of the Faculty Club stemmed from President Faunce's 1922 annual report, when he declared a desire to improve the relationships amongst faculty and a sense of "mutual acquaintance which is the prerequisite of intellectual understanding and cooperation" (Encyclopedia Brunoniana).

When first established, The Faculty Club was originally housed at 13 Brown Street, at what is now known as Andrews House and Health Services. Annual dues funded the day-to-day activities at the club, however they were minimal enough that all faculty could join the new organization (Encyclopedia Brunoniana). Because of this inclusive policy, the club experienced some financial difficulties in the 1940s, requiring the university to subsidize the daily costs, written off "as a contribution to the convenience and morale of the faculty" (Memorandum to Mr. Wriston). The "club rooms" on the first floor were furnished by the faculty themselves and used communally while the upper floors were rented to single faculty, assistants, and graduate students (Encyclopedia Brunoniana). Membership was at first restricted to full time instructors and administrative officers however over the course of time these original rules developed to include a broader membership. In 1944 women were admitted into the dining room. The traditional activities that took place consisted of introducing new faculty and hosting bi-monthly luncheons with guest speakers. In 1957 a new room in the basement opened as a self-service lunchroom and was then used as a cocktail lounge later

in the afternoon and evenings. More recently, there were building renovations completed in 1975, which added four new dining rooms. Then in 1980 a major renovation took place to add on a one-story wing, creating a dining room that could accommodate 100 people. Today the Faculty Club serves many different functions and has expanded its membership to include alumni. This is an intriguing site because it has its own historic significance, a long history of being a close neighbor to Brown, and a substantial Brown history of its own. Many research questions could be addressed at this site.

It will be valuable to conduct our work in a location once used as a home because as James Deetz explains “the house... is the domestic center and the location of most production of essential artifacts (Deetz 126).” The Faculty Club building on Magee Street was certainly used as a private home as well as a university building where many domestic practices took place, such as cooking, eating, and socializing. Hopefully, not only will there be a significant amount of material recovered but it will be informative in tracing these various layers of the house’s history.

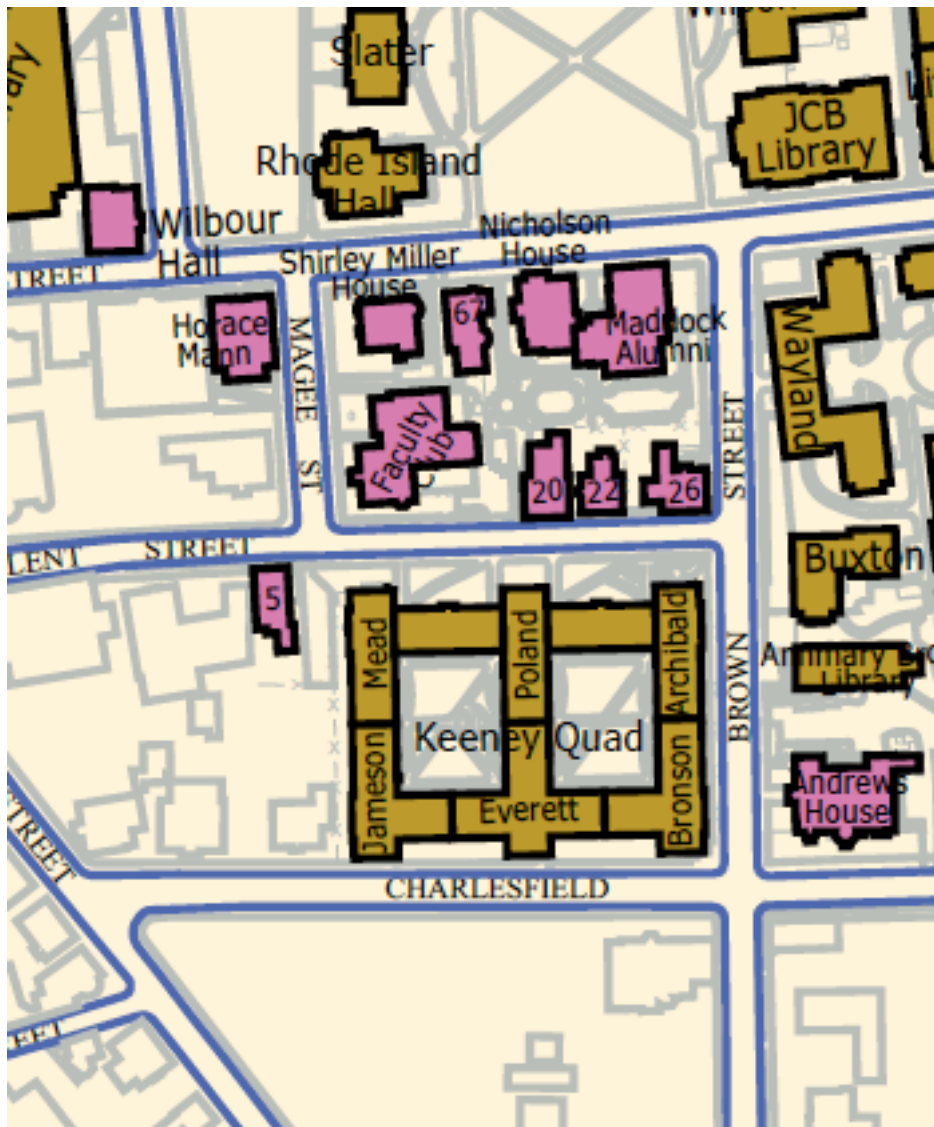
While there are historic documents relating to the Allen family as well as the use of the house as the Faculty Club, an archaeological study could reveal more about the everyday life of this prominent Rhode Island businessman as well as the everyday lives of faculty members, who often get overlooked in favor of students and administrators. Archaeology has the ability to illuminate these under-represented groups of people and the details of everyday life, which is often not documented in the historic record. Excavating at the Faculty Club could potentially shed light on the home life of Zachariah Allen and William Ely as well as the faculty who simply work on the campus but often do not reside on the campus, thus leaving behind only faint traces of their lives.

The design and use of the Faculty Club, since it was part of Brown University, appears to be well documented in the archives of the John Hay Library. For example, in 1941 a letter from Vice President Adams was sent to classics professor Charles Robinson, addressing the layout of the building, how the various rooms were being utilized, and what could improve the building (Adams Correspondence). There are many other letters, receipts, and maps documenting similar daily operations of the club in the archives.

However, other private buildings which were simply bought by or given to Brown and not built by the university are a bit more problematic in terms of historic documents and maps. It might be difficult to place this study in the larger context of the relationship between Brown and its neighbors as well as its campus expansion patterns. However, information about the owners prior to the Brown era of use can be investigated at the Rhode Island Historical Society where there is a collection of “Zachariah Allen Papers” as well as correspondence and manuscripts relating to William Ely. If this area were to be examined, these documents could prove useful as complimentary evidence to the early history of the structure and area. While it is easy to speculate about the people and activities of the Faculty Club because it is still a functioning building and club today, archaeological evidence can potentially give us a clearer, unbiased view of the past and the real story of this building and space.

**\*\*As a side note, there are a few logistical issues with this site. The yard around the building is very condensed and landscaped. Also in the front yard (the western side of the building) there is a water fountain and so we might run into problems with piping and the water system. Despite these obstacles, there appear to be a few spots around the building where small trenches could be opened and excavation could occur.**

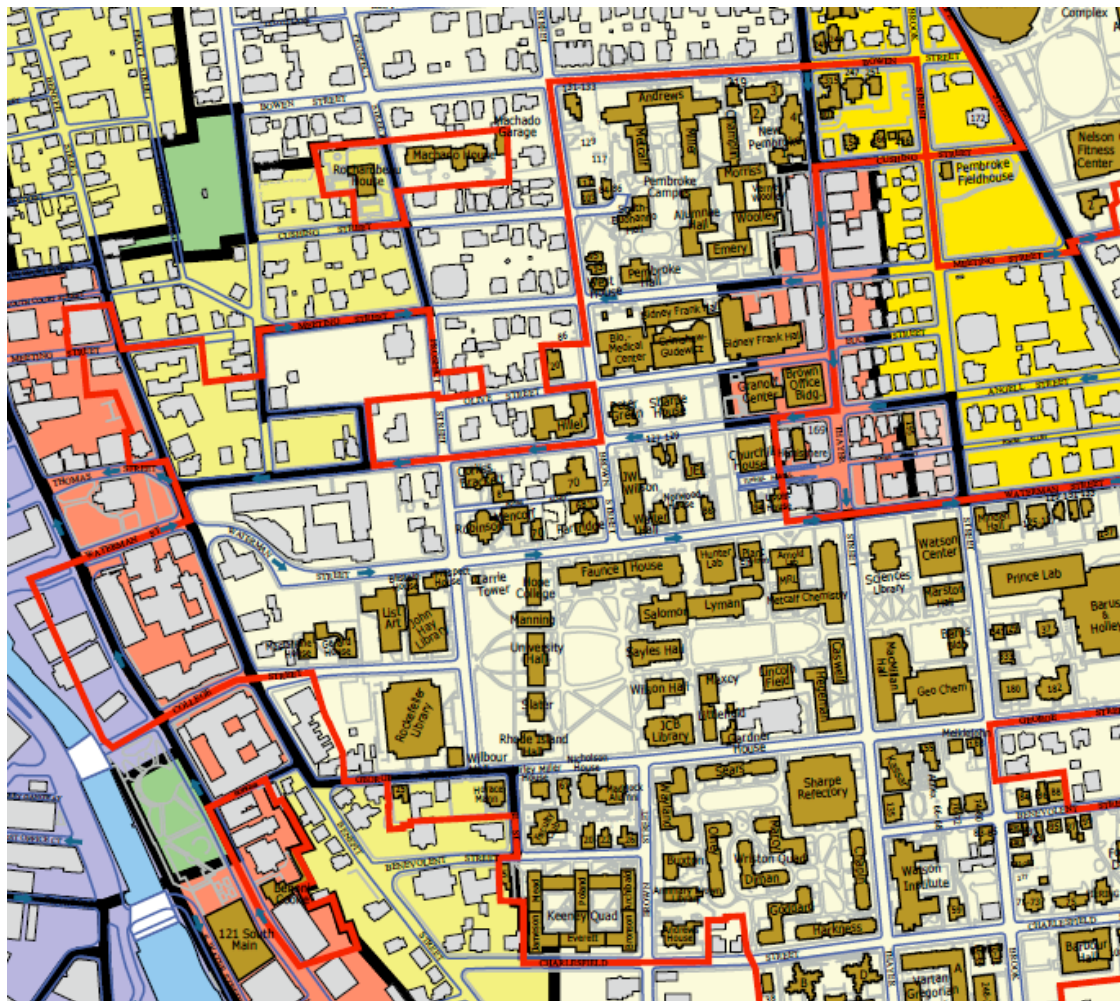
***‘Brown Houses’ Map with Faculty Club and surrounding Brown University Campus***  
 (\*Note distinction made between ‘Brown University Building’ and ‘Brown University House.’)



- Brown Houses
- Brown to Brown Home Ownership Program
- Brown University Buildings

[http://brown.edu/Facilities/Facilities\\_Management/docs/Brown%20Houses\\_8.5x11.pdf](http://brown.edu/Facilities/Facilities_Management/docs/Brown%20Houses_8.5x11.pdf)

*'Zoning Map' showing the University and its surroundings.*



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| <b>R-1</b> One Family District               | <b>W-1</b> Waterfront: Commercial/Residential District |
| <b>R-2</b> Two Family District               | <b>W-2</b> Waterfront: Commercial/Industrial District  |
| <b>R-3</b> Three Family District             | <b>D-1</b> Downtown: Central Business District         |
| <b>R-G</b> General Residence District        | <b>D-2</b> Downtown: Mill District                     |
| <b>R-M</b> Multi-Family Dwelling District    | <b>O.S.</b> Open Space District                        |
| <b>R-P</b> Residential Professional District | <b>P.S.</b> Public Space District                      |
| <b>C-1</b> Limited Commercial District       | Brown University Buildings                             |
| <b>C-2</b> General Commercial District       | Non Brown Buildings                                    |
| <b>C-4</b> Heavy Commercial District         | Institutional Zone                                     |



## ***Faculty Club***



[http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/Faculty\\_Club/images/building2.jpg](http://www.brown.edu/Facilities/Faculty_Club/images/building2.jpg)

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