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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Newport Restoration Foundation Begins a Residential-Scale Energy Efficiency Study of Historic Properties

Questions and Answers

Why is the Newport Restoration Foundation undertaking this pilot study?

As one of the largest property-owning entities in Newport, it is our responsibility to better understand the energy efficiency of our properties, and to do what we can to make them as livable and sustainable as possible. We are committed to improving our homes' energy consumption, reducing utility costs and increasing livability for our tenant-stewards, and decreasing the carbon footprint of our properties. This is a pilot project designed as a fact-finding and exploratory study of potential strategies, with the goal of implementation on a larger scale.

At the same time, we have an equal responsibility to the historic fabric and character of these houses, many of which contain historic material over 200 years old. The balancing of these two responsibilities is the basis for this study: how can we make our homes as livable and energy efficient as possible **without** compromising the historic character of the properties?

The data and guidance we receive from this study will contribute not only to our understanding of our own buildings but will be of value to the wider community of historic homeowners. Our goal is to create a matrix of recommendations for non-intrusive implementations that any historic homeowner will be able to make to their own property and increase the livability of their home.

Will this study only be relevant to NRF's houses, or will it benefit the wider community?

This study will provide insight to historic homeowners interested in understanding non-invasive mitigations to improve their homes' energy efficiency and serve as a model for other historic preservation organizations. The results of the study, the recommendations of the experts, and the implementation of the chosen energy efficiency strategy will be shared publicly. We believe this study will benefit our community, and we look forward to sharing the knowledge and experience gained from it.

Why is 38 Green Street the site of the study?

In many ways, 38 Green Street typifies the historic home in Newport, and as such, it is an excellent candidate for our study. It has 1,200 square feet of living space, two floors, and a basement. Like many other historic houses, 38 Green Street has many layers of historic fabric; from its original construction circa 1730 to its restoration by NRF in 1983-84, including plank construction, windows, and doors. Unusual for a NRF building, though common in many restored historic structures, it was partially insulated during its restoration in 1983-84. Historic structures vary greatly in their states of restoration, preservation, and renovation, meaning the results of this study will be applicable to all historic homeowners interested in improving their properties.

How is the data going to be collected?

One method of data collection for this study will be a blower door test. This involves installing a powerful fan in a sealed doorway of the house that lowers the air pressure inside the home compared to outside. The inspectors then use infrared temperature sensors, smoke puffers, and other methods to locate air leaking into the house through gaps in beams, plaster, seams, windows, and other problem areas. This data will inform what steps will be taken to mitigate the air leaks. Project consultants are also reviewing energy bills, building condition assessments, and other qualitative data across NRF's portfolio.

What is the benefit of this project to the Newport historic homeowners community?

The outcome of our study will be a matrix of recommendations from energy efficiency and historic preservation experts on implementations to mitigate air leaks from historic properties. We will also receive quantitative and qualitative analyses and data on the energy performance of our houses. We understand that as each historic property is unique, there is no "one size fits all" answer for improving energy efficiency. However, we are aiming to create and implement scalable guidelines that we and other historic property owners can implement to improve historic buildings while retaining the historic fabric and character.

By undertaking this project on behalf of historic homeowners in Newport, we are hoping to expand the knowledge of energy efficiency and historic properties and provide a model for implementing energy efficient mitigations that increase the livability of historic homes.

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About Newport Restoration Foundation

The Newport Restoration Foundation is a non-profit organization established by philanthropist Doris Duke in 1968 to preserve the architectural and cultural heritage of 18th and 19th century Newport. NRF promotes economic and community restoration through historic preservation initiatives like Keeping History Above Water, which addresses the impact of sea-level rise on the built environment in the wake of climate change, and the Historic Trades Initiative, which harnesses the knowledge of local specialists

to train the next generation of preservation craftspeople. In addition to a collection of more than 70 colonial houses, now rented to tenant stewards, NRF operates properties that are open to the public — including Rough Point, the Newport home of Doris Duke, and The Vernon House, a site of expansive storytelling, contemporary dialogue, and preservation trades skill-building. For more information, please visit www.NewportRestoration.org.

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