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## NEIGHBORHOOD OF THE WEEK | HARRISVILLE

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### Mill roots shape community's look

Plentiful stock of historical houses blends today with affordable apartments and condos

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By CHRISTINE DUNN JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

BURRILLVILLE — Unlike many suburban communities, Harrisville includes a wide range of housing types, including affordable apartments for seniors and families, newer single-family and condominium developments, and many historical homes and duplexes originally built for mill workers.



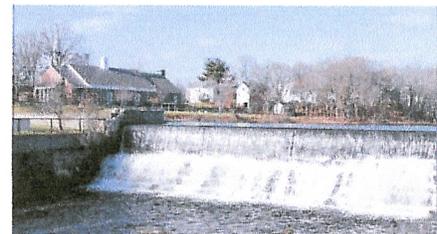
Harrisville is the center of Burrillville's town government operations, and is also home to several schools and historical churches, but a former mill clocktower building, at the redeveloped Stillwater Mill Center, is the tallest building in the village center.



The former mill site was honored in 2012 with an award from Grow Smart Rhode Island. Durkee Brown Viveiros Werenfels Architects, of Providence, designed the complex, which includes the 25,000-square-foot Jesse M. Smith Memorial Library and the 47-unit Clocktower Apartments, located in 71,500 square feet of the signature clocktower building.



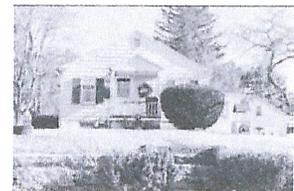
The Waterfall Café is steps away from the library.



The site also includes a farmers' market pavilion, which is also available for private rental.

Tom Kravitz, the town's director of economic development, said the town-owned pavilion has become a popular gathering site, and recently hosted more than 400 people at a visit-with-Santa event this holiday season.

In the 1840s, immigrants from Ireland moved in large numbers to Harrisville and nearby Pascoag to work in the local woolen mills, according to the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission.



Mill owner William Tinkham, who moved to Harrisville in 1856, was a prime mover behind the construction of the Providence and Springfield Railroad, which in 1873 started service between Providence and Pascoag. His son, Ernest Tinkham, who lived at 134 East Ave., built the new Harrisville mills in 1911, including the clocktower.

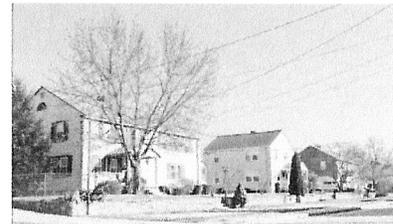


The Clocktower Apartments were built by the nonprofit Neighborworks Blackstone Valley. They include affordable and market-rate one-, two- and three-bedroom units, and they were built with geothermal heating and cooling, recycled materials, and low-consumption plumbing fixtures.



Stillwater Heights, an affordable housing development for seniors, is just east of the mill site at 30 Central St. The 57 apartments there were built by The Community Builders Inc., a national nonprofit developer.

Harrisville's plentiful stock of historical houses, much of it built by and for former mill owners, including the Tinkhams and Austin T. Levy. Levy, of the Stillwater Worsted Co., began leasing the Harrisville mills in 1912 and bought them in 1921. The company operated the Harrisville mills until 1972.



To help people during the Great Depression, Levy kept workers on at his mills and also started a number of public building projects in Harrisville, including a new town hall, court building, library and a meeting hall, built in 1933, that is now known as the Assembly Theater. The theater is located at 26 East Ave., next to the Harrisville mill pond and waterfall. Recent events there included a production of "The Trial of Ebenezer Scrooge" by The Rhode Island Stage Ensemble, and performances by The Dance Factory.

