

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Providence	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Pearce (Nathaniel) House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
305 Brook Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Providence

STATE: Rhode Island, 02906      CODE: 44      COUNTY: Providence      CODE: 007

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
Donald Oliver

STREET AND NUMBER:  
305 Brook Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence      STATE: Rhode Island, 02906      CODE: 44

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Dorrance and Washington Streets

CITY OR TOWN: Providence      STATE: Rhode Island, 02903      CODE: 44

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1961       Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Independence Avenue and 1st Street, S. E.,

CITY OR TOWN: Washington      STATE: District of Columbia      CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:  
COUNTY:  
ENTRY NUMBER  
DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input type="checkbox"/> Original Site		
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE						
<p>The Nathaniel Pearce house was originally erected, probably around 1801, at 41 George Street and in 1888 was moved to its present location. It is a two-and-one-half-storey dwelling of heavy timber construction (plainly visible on the interior) and rests upon a low brownstone foundation dating from the 1888 moving. The exterior is covered by narrow clapboards and has quoins defining the main block. The roof ridge is parallel to the street; the roof is pierced on the street (west) side by three gabled dormers and at the rear by an elongated shed dormer--all dormers probably being early XX-Century additions. A flat, railed platform is astride the gable ridge between the two interior chimneys and is probably also a later addition. Two sympathetic additions to the original house run towards the back of the site. Wallis Howe is thought to be the architect of the south-east addition, built in 1940; the north-east wing is earlier.</p> <p>Centred in the conventional five-bay-wide street façade is a pedimented doorway, its fanlight rising into the pediment, characteristic of early Republican houses in Rhode Island. From this doorway, iron-railed brownstone steps (of 1888) run down to the sidewalk. There is a similar, though less detailed, doorway in the north gable-end of the house. All windows in the original house have splayed lintels with carved keystones, typical of elegant houses of its period; window sashes have six-over-six lights; louvred wooden shutters are now attached to most windows. Each of the gable-ends of the house has four irregularly-spaced bays, those on the north including the aforementioned entrance and those on the south including a tripartite window probably dating from the 1940 remodelling. There is a highly decorative eaves cornice with a running fret design and bed mould; the delicate fret also ornaments the end gables.</p> <p>The north-east wing is actually an aggregate of various-sized two-storey additions. Two doorways (former service entrances) with segmental transoms face Brook Street; a door also opens to the kitchen-yard in the rear. This wing, though having simpler trim, is in remarkable harmony with the original structure. The south-east wing was put on in 1940 by Howe (it is thought), an important architect, of sensitive taste, in Providence during the first half of the XX Century. This addition is in the Colonial Revival style, consistent with the earlier parts of the dwelling. Within the recess formed by the two rearward wings, and above their one-storey connector, is seen the large, round-headed landing window of the original house, with its carved keystone.</p> <p>Internally, the basic plan is the traditional one of a broad central hall from which open four large, square, corner rooms on the first floor; and the plan above is similar. Conventionally placed at the rear of the central hall is the open main stair, of two runs separated by a landing. Short flights of steps branching out from the landing now lead</p>						
(See Continuation Sheet.)						

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Providence	
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(Number all entries)

7. Description.

to the second floors of the rear additions. There is also a concealed staircase, ascending from first to attic floors, between the north wall and the north chimney; this secondary stair utilises the door in the north gable-end and seems early--if perhaps not contemporary with the c. 1801 house.

Interior trim corresponds with that of the exterior in its delicate (Federal period) scale. The use of decoration primarily for articulation is representative of the period in which the house was built. Doors are eight-panelled and surrounded by moulded architraves which are "eared" in more important locations. Window trim is similarly crossetted in principal rooms. A moulded chair-rail runs around most rooms; only in the central hall is there a panelled wainscot. Cornices in the north-west and south-west front rooms have dentils; that of the central hall is carried on brackets; elsewhere they are without these embellishments. "One-storey" shelved mantels are in all rooms of the original house, except for the south-east drawing-room, where there occurs one with a panelled over-mantel--probably a Colonial Revival replacement. The main stair has ramped railings above an open string, and the newel gives a delicate, fluted terminal. A handsome archway divides the second-floor hall: it comprises a full-span moulded architrave, with keystone, carried upon square fluted pilasters. Interior detailing in the south-east wing is of rather rich Colonial Revival style in both wood and plaster. The north-east wing contains only domestic offices.

This house projects extraordinary dignity on its limited site. Important to its appearance is a fence of delicate palings running across the front of the property. The fabric remains obviously fine on both exterior and interior. However--due to a now fluctuating neighbourhood status and recently changing ownerships--the over-all condition of this house is less than the "excellent" pronounced in the 1961 Historic American Buildings Survey.

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) C. 1801

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)
<input type="checkbox"/> Historic	<input type="checkbox"/> Industry	losophy	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Invention	<input type="checkbox"/> Science	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Art	Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> Literature	itarian	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Theater	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> Music	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	_____

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The Nathaniel Pearce house is immediately recognisable as indigenous to Rhode Island: it possesses so many details characteristic of early Republican architecture here that it can be taken as an archetype of domestic design of its period. It remains in a remarkable condition of architectural integrity, with decorative features preserved.

The significance of such a building is enhanced by the number of surviving, somewhat similar, ones to which it can be compared or likened. Variations of its design and trim, often less fine, throughout the state reveal the Nathaniel Pearce house as a leading member of a movement in domestic architecture clearly identified with Rhode Island, and of that it is a particularly fine representative.

Its builder, Nathaniel Pearce, was a ship-master and ship-owner: his residence indicates the prominence he and his profession enjoyed. The prosperity of Providence in his time depended upon its activity as a port, and the importance of a ship's captain is reflected in Pearce's house. In its original position on George Street, the house must have had an expansive view of the old, large bay. Pearce lived in this house until 1856, when it went to his heirs. In 1888 it was owned by the Goddard family, who sold the George Street land to Brown University, which required either demolition or moving of the house. John J. DeWolf at that point bought the building and had it transferred to Brook Street. Until the late 1960's the house remained in the DeWolf family, and their name is frequently used in referring to it.

On its present site, no longer in proximity to the bay and in the company of much younger, nondescript neighbours, the house appears somewhat out of context but shows itself contrastingly important. Once staid and fashionable, the immediate environment of the Pearce house is not now appealing; a site to the south is a parking-lot; nearby is a "pizzeria;" indicative of trends in the area. Brook Street is one of the least-defined edges of Brown University. Open space along that street to the north and areas to the east now acquired by the university seem threatening to the house: it is almost alone in a no-man's-land. In spite of its present, and possible future, surroundings, the loss or mutilation of this house would be a local disaster. Since it is now in a fragile condition and a precarious position it needs attention focussed upon its intrinsic beauty and its landmark value.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Providence Preservation Society, Providence, Rhode Island: Brook Street records prepared by A. Downing and E. Gowdey, 1961.  
 Overby, Osmund: Historic American Buildings Survey, No. RI-184 (Washington, D. C.), 1961.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		41° 49' 30.15" N	71° 23' 57.16" W	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Frederic Cawley, Consultant**

ORGANIZATION: **Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission**      DATE: **August 16, 1971**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**State House, 90 Smith Street**

CITY OR TOWN: **Providence**      STATE: **Rhode Island, 02903**      CODE: **114**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National       State       Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Keeper of The National Register*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Providence	
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1. NAME

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AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
305 Brook Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Providence

STATE:  
Rhode Island

CODE  
44

COUNTY:  
Providence

CODE  
007

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher Bene

DATE OF PHOTO: 1971

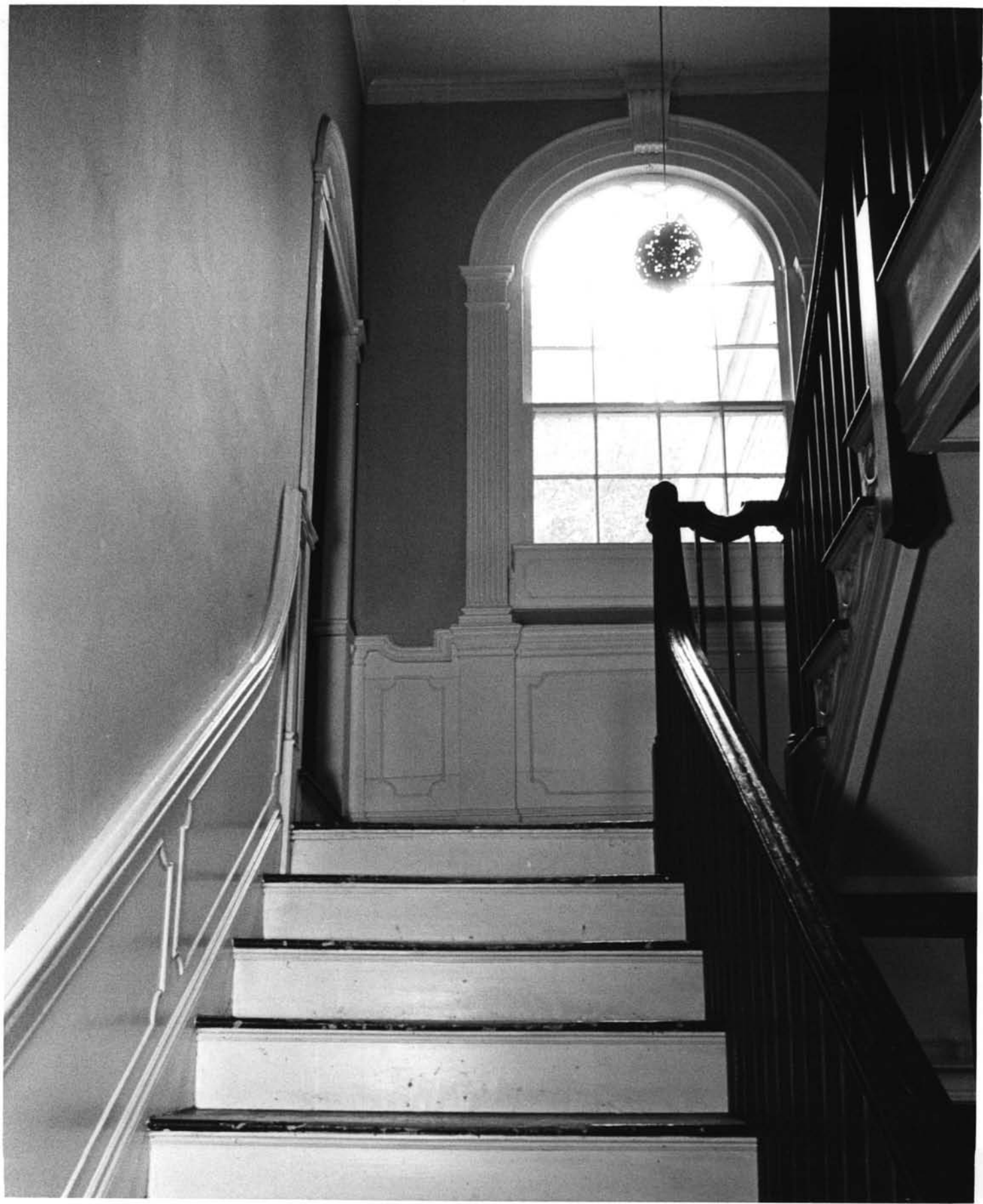
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, State House,  
90 Smith Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02903

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

West front on street.







UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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COUNTY Providence	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>			
COMMON: Pearce (Nathaniel) House			
AND/OR HISTORIC:			
<b>2. LOCATION</b>			
STREET AND NUMBER: 305 Brook Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Providence			
STATE: Rhode Island	CODE 144	COUNTY: Providence	CODE 007
<b>3. PHOTO REFERENCE</b>			
PHOTO CREDIT: Ross S. McElwee			
DATE OF PHOTO: 1971			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, State House, 90 Smith Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02903			
<b>4. IDENTIFICATION</b>			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.  View up principal staircase, showing landing window.			



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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STREET AND NUMBER:

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CITY OR TOWN:

Providence

STATE:

Rhode Island

CODE

111

COUNTY:

Providence

CODE

007

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Ross S. McElwee

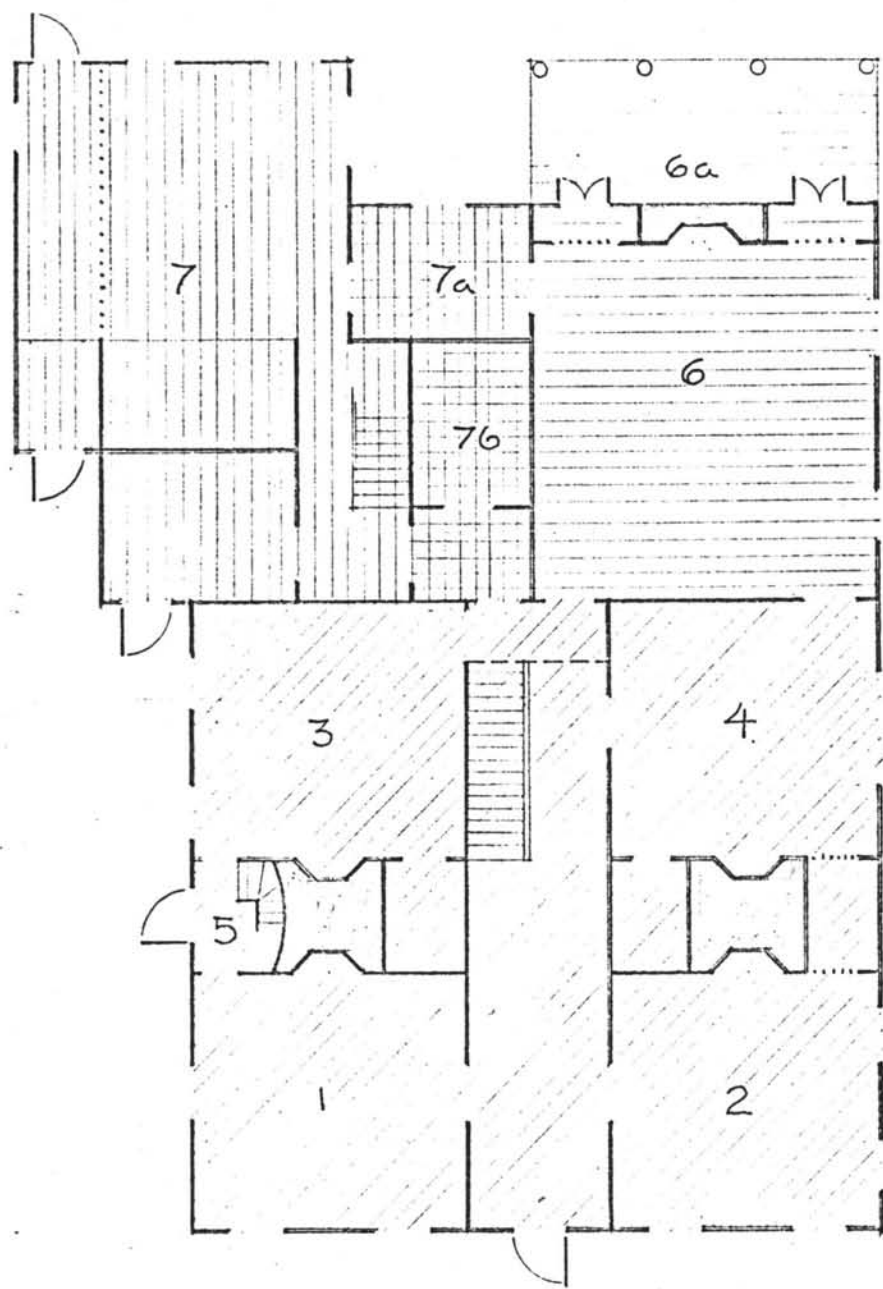
DATE OF PHOTO: 1971





NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, State House,  
90 Smith Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02903

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

East end of drawing room.



-  C.1801 House
-  Services additions
-  1940 addition
-  One storey connector

### SCHMATIC 1ST FLOOR PLAN

1. Parlor
2. Drawing Room
3. Kitchen to original house
4. Present Drawing Room; remodeled
5. concealed staircase
6. Dining Room
- 6a. Porch
7. Service
- 7a. Pantry
- 7b. Powder room,

0.....5 ← N

Rhode Island

COUNTY

Providence

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

*(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)*

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STREET AND NUMBER:

305 Brook Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Providence

STATE:

Rhode Island

CODE

441

COUNTY:

Providence

CODE

007

**3. PHOTO REFERENCE**

PHOTO CREDIT:

DATE OF PHOTO:

NEGATIVE FILED AT:

**4. IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Sketch-plan of first floor, by Frederic Cawley, 1971.





GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES

Latitude: 41° 49' 30.15" N

Longitude: 71° 23' 57.16" W

Project Depth 16 Feet  
© 1998  
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© 1994  
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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Providence	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
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COUNTY:  
Providence

CODE  
007

3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE:  
U. S. Geological Survey

SCALE: 1: 24,000

DATE: 1957

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.