

Candace Allen House  
12 Benevolent Street  
Providence  
Providence County  
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-169

HABS  
RI,  
4-PROV,  
69-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

## CANDACE ALLEN HOUSE

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RI,  
4-PROV,  
69-

Address: 12 Benevolent Street, Providence, Providence County,  
Rhode Island  
PLAT 12, LOT 332

Present Owner  
and Occupant: William Slater Allen

Present Use: Dwelling.

Brief Statement of Significance:

This is a large brick house, designed by the Providence architect John Holden Greene. This property has always been in the Allen family.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

The present lot was assembled in three transactions by Crawford Allen in 1809, 1817, and 1818.

1809 Lydia Allen: "I give and bequeath to my nephew Crawford Allen the lott called the Crawford lot near the Congregational Meeting House adjoining Abigail Smith, also . . ." Wills Book 12, page 275, in Providence City Hall.

1817 Asa Larned and Mary Throop Jenckes sell for \$225 to Crawford Allen a strip of land fronting E/ly on a cross street (Magee) 15' that runs from Benevolent to George Street; W by John Carlile 15'; S by Henry Smith 100' and by grantee 100'; N 200' by Balch, Tallman, and Leonard. . . Deed Book 40, page 327, in Providence City Hall.

1818 Henry Smith and wife Abby C Smith sell for \$900 to Crawford Allen a certain lot of land on the N/ly side of Benevolent Street. Bounded: N by Crawford Allen 100'; E by Crawford Allen 80'; S by Benevolent Street 100'; W by Col. John Carlile 80'. . . Deed Book 41, page 280, in Providence City Hall.

1818 Crawford Allen sells to Candace Allen, single woman, a certain tract of land bounded: S by Benevolent Street 200'; E by a cross Street from Benevolent to George (Magee) 100'; N by Mary Balch, Thomas

Tallman, and George Leonard 200'; W by Col. John Carlile 100'; . . which comprises three lots. One at the junction of the two streets devised to me by the last will and testament of the late Lydia Allen; the second directly West I bought of Henry and Abby C Smith; the third N/ly of the other two I bought of Asa Larned and Mary Throop Jenckes. . . Deed Book 41, page 282, in Providence City Hall.

- 1837 FIRE RECORD Candace Allen: \$10,000, House on the N side of Benevolent Street . . brick. .50'sq., addition 45'. . all 2 stories high in front and rear. . . occupied for a DWELLING HOUSE. . . Mss. fire insurance records of the Providence Mutual Insurance Co. at the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, R. I. Vol. 16, policy #6700.

This property has always been in the Allen family. It was taxed to the following persons in the year designated:

1854 Candace Allen (died in 1860)  
1860 Crawford Allen ex u/w Candace  
1872 Sarah Senter Allen, wid Crawford  
1887 Allen's Print Works  
1887 Anne C Allen Brown wf John Carter Brown  
1937 Anna C A Brown Estate  
1937 Phillip Allen  
1953 Phillip Allen jr & Wm S Allen  
1957 William S Allen

2. Date of erection: 1818-1820.
3. Architect: John Holden Greene
4. Sources of information: Antoinette Forrester Downing, Early Homes of Rhode Island (Richmond, Virginia: Garrett and Massie, 1937), p. 433.  
Norman Morrison Isham, John Holden Greene, unpublished mss. in possession of John Hutchins Cady, Providence, Rhode Island.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Cowdey  
for the Providence Preservation Society  
December 1961.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This large, two-story, brick house, built 1818-1820, is an example of the more

elaborate work of the architect John Holden Greene.

2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Large rectangular house facing south, 50' x 48', five bays, two stories, with two-story wing to northwest, 16' x 32', and lower two-story wing beyond that, 24' x 16'.
2. Foundations: Regular coursed ashlar granite.
3. Wall construction: Nayatt brick, very narrow joints, Flemish bond on front, common bond on sides and back; walls of wings not keyed into main block, of brick in common or running bond.
4. Porches, stoops: One-story Corinthian entrance porch, granite steps, fluted wood columns in groups of three at front corners, entablature with ornamented frieze, modillion cornice, iron railings. Doric porch at southwest side of first wing.
5. Chimneys: Three brick chimneys in end walls of main block; two on east; one on west. Two brick chimneys in wings.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Twelve panel main door, Doric frontispiece with pairs of fluted columns; Complex moldings, three centered arched top light, side lights, now with colored glass. Six panel southwest side door, semicircular top light.
  - b. Windows : Six over six light double hung windows, except first floor south with six over six over six light triple hung windows extending down to floor line with iron balconies, incised stone lintels. Tripartite window over main entrance porch, with colonettes and elliptical fan.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape: Low hip with monitor.
  - b. Cornice: Drilled mutule cornice of wood, beaded bed mold, and pendants.
  - c. Dormers: Low monitor lights attic store rooms.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Central hall plan, two parlors on east, dining room at southwest, study north of dining room, small room at north end of hall, kitchen and one small apartment in wings to northwest. Bedrooms on second floor in similar arrangement. Storerooms in third floor of main block.
2. Stairways: Open well stairway in central hall, curved 180° at top, open string, sawn ornament on step ends based on pointed arch and trefoil, molded handrail, turned balusters, heavy octagonal newel. U-shaped back stairs between dining room and study.
3. Flooring: Wide boards, later tiled central hall in pattern of white, blue, light and dark brown, black.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster. Early wallpaper in several rooms, patterned in east parlors, later scenic paper in hall, textured brocade pattern in dining room. Scenes painted on walls in northeast bedroom.
5. Doorways and doors: Six panel, wood doors, natural finish walnut doors on first floor, flat sunk panels, undercut ogee moldings. Doorways with deep moldings of Gothic profile, mitered except in hall with corner blocks.
6. Trim: Complex molded plaster ceiling cornices and medallions throughout. Delicate foliated cornice frieze in hall. Heavy brackets with fruit forms between in dining room cornice. Greek key frieze in northeast parlor. Folding paneled interior shutters. Paneled window aprons except in south windows of front rooms where windows extend to floor.
7. Hardware: Silver knobs, locks, bolts, butt hinges.
8. Lighting: Electric
9. Heating: Central hot air system installed in 1840's. Three fireplaces on each floor of main house. One-story marble mantels, with colonettes on first floor, with round-headed opening in southwest bedroom.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: Large lot, northwest corner Benevolent and Magee Streets; house close to east side with yard on south and west and driveway on north.
2. Enclosures: Iron fence on east and part of south. Wood fence on west half of south.
3. Outbuildings: Two-story brick garage with turntable at northwest corner of lot.
4. Walks: Flagstone walks, square stone tiles to front entrance.
5. Landscaping: Informal with garden to west; trees, shrubs, flowers and lawn.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect  
National Park Service  
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