

Francis W. Goddard House
71 George Street
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-194

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
94-

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

FRANCIS W. GODDARD HOUSE

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Address: 71 George Street, Providence, Providence County,
Rhode Island.

36 George Street to 1891. Plat 12, Lot 322.

Present Owner: Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, with
life tenancy for present occupant

Present Occupant: Mrs. Samuel M. Nicholson

Present Use: Dwelling

Brief Statement
of Significance: This is one of the larger houses in this area,
built for a member of a prominent Providence
family, and an example of the houses on College
Hill in the 1870's.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1895 Thomas Whitaker, sells for \$15,600 to Charlotte R Goddard a certain lot of land with dwelling house and other improvements on the S side of George Street bounded: N by George Street 75'; W by Samuel Foster 138'; S by formerly Capt Joseph Crawford 74'; being the same estate of which my Father Thomas Whitaker died seized of which the other heirs conveyed to me by deed in 1854 (Deed Book 138, page 343). . . Deed Book 139, page 365, in Providence City Hall.
- 1882 William Goddard, quit claims to Francis W Goddard et al, trustees u/w Charlotte R Goddard a certain lot of land with buildings and other improvements thereon...being the estate or larger part of the estate conveyed to said Charlotte R Goddard by deed from Thomas A. Whitaker in 1855. . . Deed Book 318, page 318, in Providence City Hall.
- 1888 Francis W Goddard conveys to George W R Matteson and Howard O Sturges in trust, his Homestead Estate on George Street, bounded:

N. by George Street 73.19'; E by William Goddard;
S by Samuel Tingley and Eliza Sheldon jr; W by
Thomas P I Goddard...Deed Book 345, page 211, in
Providence City Hall.

1904 Herbert Wells, after the resignation of Howard O
Sturges and George W R Matteson is made the new
trustee with the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Compnay
of the Estate of Francis W. Goddard...Deed Book 467,
page 184, in Providence City Hall.

1946 Robert H I Goddard et al qc to Brown University
"a certain lot of land with all buildings and
improvements, beint Lot #2 on Plat Card #917...
Deed Book 860, page 96, in Providence City Hall.

From PROVIDENCE DIRECTORY

1863 Francis W. Goddard, listed at this address to
1889

1890 Lockwood Danielson, listed at this address to
1899

1900 Samuel M. Nicholson, listed at this address to...

2. Date of erection: c. 1872. (John Hutchins Cady, The Civic
and Architectural Development of Providence 1636-1950
(Providence, Rhode Island: The Book Shop, 1957), pp.
155, 304)).

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Gowdey
for the Providence Preservation Society
January 1962

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a large, asymmetrical
brick house, which reflects in its massing, plan, and
detailing the more conservative architectural tendencies
of the College Hill area in the 1870's. The house con-
tains outstanding collections of furniture and paintings.

2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Stubby L-shape, nearly square, about
50' x 50', two-and-a-half stories, with three-and-a-half
story pavilion at northeast corner. George Street on
north, main entrance on west side, service entrance on
east side. A projecting gabled bay on the north front,
and a large chimney on east side break the closed form
of the house.

2. Foundations: Brownstone

3. Wall construction: Pressed brick, running bond, narrow mortar joints, carved stone belt courses.
4. Porches: One-story entrance porch at main entrance on west side, brick with stone trim, Gothic ornament, round arched openings.
5. Chimneys: Four brick chimneys with corbelled, complex caps.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Two leaf, paneled entrance door with semicircular top light. Service door on east side. French doors to garden from solarium on south.
 - b. Windows and shutters: Double hung windows, one over one light in front, two over two light in back. Carved stone lintels. Shutter hardware in place, but no shutters.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Mansard roof, covered with slate, broken by steep gables on several sides. Steeply pitched hip roof on pavilion on northeast corner.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Bracketed main cornice, projecting open eaves on gables and dormers.
 - c. Dormers: Gabled dormers on all sides.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Center entrance hall at west front, stair hall in center of the house at right angles to south from entrance hall, parlor at northwest, library at southwest opening to small solarium, dining room at northeast, kitchen at southwest.
2. Stairways: U-shape main stair, closed string, to third floor, treads 44-1/2" wide x 13"; risers 7". Heavy rail with alternating types of turned balusters. Turned and carved newel, varying 6" to 12" in diameter, 5' high plus lamp. Dark stained finish. Open well, with stained glass skylight.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster, painted or papered. 11'-4" ceilings on first floor.

4. Flooring: Hardwood floors, 2-3/8" wide boards.
5. Doorways and doors: Five panel doors, mahogany or walnut, natural finish, flat sunk panels, very angular moldings. Molded, mitered architraves, small moldings grouped closely within an angular, tight, overall profile.
6. Trim: Molded plaster ceiling cornices. Small plaster ceiling medallions from which chandeliers hang. Simple underwindow aprons.
7. Hardware: Brass or silver plated, flat cut escutcheons. Large butt hinges
8. Lighting: Electric. Crystal chandeliers in entrance hall, living room and dining room.
9. Heating, fireplaces: Central hot-air heat. Library fireplace, one-story wood mantel, pilasters, carved brackets support mantel shelf, brown tiles around opening. Living room mantel, one-story wood, carved composite colonettes, mantel shelf supported on complex grouping of volutes, black marble cheeks. Dining room fireplace, two stories, shelves and cupboards at sides, mirror overmantel.

D. Site

1. General setting: On a small level lot, end to the street, entrances on sides, garden to rear, densely settled residential and university neighborhood.
2. Enclosures: Wood fence around rear.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
January 1962