

Stephen O. Metcalf House  
132 Bowen Street  
Providence  
Providence County  
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-216

HABS  
RI,  
4-PROV,  
116-

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

## STEPHEN O. METCALF HOUSE

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RI,  
4-PROV,  
116-

Address: 132 Bowen Street, Providence, Providence County,  
Rhode Island.

Plat 10, Lot 560

Present Owner: Rhode Island School of Design, Providence, Rhode  
Island

Present Occupants: Wilbur H. Norton and Samuel F. Hershey

Present Use: Two-family dwelling

Brief Statement  
of Significance: This large house, built about 1894, is an example  
of the Colonial Revival, and was originally the  
home of a member of a prominent Providence family.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

## 1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1857 Phillip Allen et al give a quit claim deed to Amos D Smith et al "a certain lot of land on the N/E corner of Prospect and Bowen St." - Deed Book 148, page 406, in Providence City Hall.
- 1858 Amos D Smith et al sell for \$13,535.68 to George A Howard, five lots of land on the N/ly side of Bowen Street, being lots #1,2,3,4,5, on "Plat of Lots on Prospect Hill". - Plat Book #4, page 74 ...being a portion of the same estate assigned to said grantors by deed from Phillip Allen et al. (Deed Book 148, page 406) and the dower right of his wife Phebe released by two certain deeds (Deed Book 150, page 233-234) - Deed Book 150, page 282, in Providence City Hall.
- 1863 George A Howard sells for \$13,535.68 to Ashbel Wall a certain lot of land bounded: W by Prospect Street 99.03'; S by Bowen Street 215 1/2'; E by Sullivan Dorr 98 1/4'; N by Halsey and H and O V Dike 232 24/100' being the same conveyed to grantor by Amos D Smith et al in 1858. - Deed Book 165, page 127 in Providence City Hall.
- 1863 Ashbel Wall sells for \$14,000 to Asa Pierce a certain tract of land on the N/Ely corner of Bowen

and Prospect Streets. Bounded E by Sullivan Dorr 90 1/2'; S by Bowen Street 215 1/2'; W by Prospect St 99.03'; N by T L Halsey, Henry A and Oscar D Dike 132.74'...Said lots being #1,2,3,4,5 on plat laid out and delineated in "Plat of Lots of Prospect Hill" in Book of Plats #4, page 74 and is same conveyed to me by George A Howard in 1863. - Deed Book 175, page 119, in Providence City Hall.

- 1868 Asa Pierce.. "I give to my beloved wife for and during her life my Homestead Estate on 69 High (Prospect) - Wills Book 22, page 218, in Providence City Hall.
- 1885 George A Pierce.. "I give and devise to my daughter Esther R Pierce all my Estate both real and personal. - Wills Book 30, page 432, in Providence City Hall.
- 1910 This property was taxed to Esther Pierce Metcalf, wife of Stephen O Metcalf. Stephen O Metcalf lived at 72 Bowen Street up to 1895 and then was listed as living at 132 Bowen Street. - Providence Directory.

This property was taxed to the following persons in the year designated:

- 1925 Stephen O Metcalf for life  
1950 George P Metcalf, trustee u/d trust  
1951 George P Metcalf 3/5 and R I School of Design 2/5  
1952 R I School of Design

2. Date of erection: c. 1894
3. Architect: Andrews, Jacques and Rantoul of Boston
4. Source of information: John Hutchins Cady, The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence 1636-1950 (Providence, Rhode Island: The Book Shop, 1957), pp. 188, 305.

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

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This large house, built about 1894, is an example of the revival of eighteenth and early nineteenth century architectural forms, with a gambrel roof, clapboard sides and brick ends, and a central hall plan.
2. Condition of fabric: Good

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Main block about 50' (south front) x 36', two-and-a-half stories; wing to northeast about 30' x 50', one-and-a-half stories high plus ground level basement at north end.
2. Foundations: Stone.
3. Wall construction: Brick end walls (Flemish bond course every tenth course), clapboards front and back, average 2" exposure at bottoms becoming wider towards the top.
4. Porches, stoops, etc.: One-story main entrance porch, triple slender Doric columns at the front corners, molded cornice and roof balustrade. Unroofed entrance stoop at northeast wing with wooden balustrade.
5. Chimneys: Brick chimneys- two in main block, inside on west half, and in east end wall; two in northeast wing, in east and north end walls.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Paneled main entrance door, 53" wide, side lights and top lights with lead mullions, simple molded frame. Three rear doors on main block and north wing.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Large bay windows flank main entrance on first floor. Eight over two light double hung windows. Louvered shutters. Large, projecting, three part window supported on four carved consoles at stair landing on north side of house.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Gambrel roof, slate.

- b. Cornice: Molded cornice with Adam brackets.
- c. Dormers: Segmental and gable-roofed dormers on main block with denticulated cornices; shed-roofed dormers on northeast wing.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Main block: Central hall plan, parlor on southeast, dining room on southwest, kitchen on northwest, large stairhall at northeast of main block. Northeast wing, now used as a separate dwelling, not visited.
2. Stairways: Large U-shape stairway to third floor: landings with wide first run, open well, open string; turned and carved balusters, large, fluted and turned newels; heavy molded handrail, scrolled and ramped.
3. Flooring: Hardwood strip flooring.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster.
5. Doors and doorways: Double sliding doors from central hall and living room and dining room. Six-panel doors; flat, sunk panels; complex, small scale moldings. Complex architraves with small scale moldings on doorways.
6. Trim: Wood trim, mostly oak, stained dark on first floor and painted on upper floors. Large ceiling cornices on first floor.
7. Hardware: Butt hinges, knobs, silver plating on hardware in principal rooms.
8. Lighting: Electric.
9. Heating: Central. Elaborate, carved mantels on fireplaces in living and dining rooms with colonettes, decorated entablatures, paneled over-mantels; three elaborate mantels in bedrooms on second floor. Living room mantel stained dark, others painted.

D. Site

1. General setting: Northeast corner of Bowen and Prospect Streets, faces south, house set back from the street on both sides, garden on east.
2. Enclosures: Low brick walls surmounted by open wood fence.
3. Outbuildings: Brick garage at east end of lot for three cars.
4. Walks: Brick, concrete and slate walks.
5. Landscaping: Informal.

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