

1840-1845
104 North Street, Northwest corner of
Waterman and Cooke Streets
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-217

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RI,
4-PROV,
117-

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

CHARLES POTTER HOUSE

Address: 154 Waterman Street, northeast corner of Waterman and Cooke Streets, Providence, Providence County, Rhode Island.

Present Owner: Mr. Carroll Harrington, 200 Grotto Avenue, Providence 6, Rhode Island

Present Use: Doctors' offices and medical clinics.

Brief Statement of Significance: This is a large brick house, designed by Thomas Tefft in the 1850's, extensively altered later.

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PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners: Original owner, Charles Potter
2. Date of erection: C. 1854
3. Architect: Thomas A. Tefft
4. Notes on alterations and additions: About 1900, under the influence of the Colonial Revival, many of the characteristic features of the original design were altered: window frames were removed and the shape of the windows changed, a balustrade was added to conceal the hip roof, the side arcade was removed and the front porch changed. Various wings have been added to the north and east sides, and the interiors have been extensively remodelled to accommodate the present offices.
5. Sources of information: Anita F. Glass, Early Victorian Domestic Architecture on College Hill (unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of Art, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, 1960), pp. 51-52.

Rhode Island Society for Encouragement of Domestic Industry, p. 118.

- B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure: Charles Potter, born in Providence Rhode Island, June 1788 - died March 21, 1857. He was the son of Abijah and Martha Potter. His father was a sea captain.

In 1807 he went into business with Elisha Dyer as a merchant. From 1819 to 1827 he imported dry goods with Charles Russell under the firm name of Potter and Russell. In 1827 he started manufacturing cotton goods. He retired from this in 1845 and from then to the time of his death speculated in real estate in Providence, Newport and other places.

He is buried at the North Burial Ground, Providence, Rhode Island.

Prepared by Margaret Fletcher
for the Providence Preservation Society
March 1962.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a large brick house built in the 1850's, designed by Thomas Feff. It has been extensively altered, and is an interesting example of a mid-nineteenth century house that has been thoroughly "colonialized" about 1900.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Main block about 60' square, three stories high, three bay south front with slightly projecting center bay, several wings added at various times on north and east.
2. Foundations: Brownstone ashlar.
3. Wall construction: Brick, running bond.
4. Porches, stoops: Original brownstone steps in place at south front. Later porches including Ionic entrance porch at the front
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Miscellaneous later additions
 - b. Windows and shutters: Later six over six light windows in altered openings with flat brick arches.
6. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Hip roof.

b. Cornice: Later modillion cornice with balustrade.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Originally central hall plan, all rooms now divided into doctors' offices. Central hall with main stairway largely intact.
2. Stairways: Very large central hallway, grand main stair, open well, closed string, U-shape, large turned balusters, square paneled newels, molded rail.
3. Flooring: Later strip floor, some patterned strip flooring may be original. Asphalt tile in some places.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster; central hall walls divided in large panels with carved corner blocks.
5. Doorways and doors: Modern flush doors, double molded architraves, some cornices over the doors with friezes and side consoles may be original. Some raised, six-panel doors on upper floors.
6. Hardware: Miscellaneous, mostly modern hardware.
7. Lighting: Electric.
8. Heating: Central. Elaborate, carved, marble mantel in rear room with overmantel mirror, probably c. 1900.

D. Site

1. General setting: Northeast corner Cooke and Waterman Streets, set back about 35' from sidewalks, modern parking lots on west, north and east sides of building.
2. Enclosures: Original cast iron fence on brownstone foundations with brownstone corner posts on south and west.

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