

Dr. William J. King House  
48 College Street  
Providence  
Providence County  
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-200

HABS  
RI,  
4-PROV,  
100-

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

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. RI-200

## DR. WILLIAM J. KING HOUSE

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RI,  
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100-

Address: 48 College Street, Providence, Providence County,  
Rhode Island.

35 College Street in 1854. Plat 12, Lot 217.

Present Owner: Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island

Present Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Donald Whitcomb on first floor,  
other tenants in three apartments on second  
floor.

Present Use: Apartment house

Brief Statement  
of Significance: This is a large wood house built in the 1840's,  
representative of the Greek Revival influence  
on houses in the College Hill area.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

## 1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1820 Sarah B Bowen sells for \$1500 to John Whipple her full undivided moiety in a certain lot of land devised to the grantor and Mary and John Bowen (now dec.,) by their grandfather Jabez Bowen. Bounded: S by College Street 329'; E by Henry and Horatio Bowen 125'; W by Benefit Street; N by N Waterman and E Pearce. . . Deed Book 44, page 145, in Providence City Hall.
- 1820 The General Assembly consents to a division of the said lot of land between Mary D. Bowen and John Whipple, Mary and John being owners of the other 1/2 part in equal moiety as tenants in common Whipple to have the part E of the division line measuring 210' on College Hill and E by Henry Bowen. . .the remainder to be set off to Mary Bowen. . . Deed Book 42, page 591, in Providence City Hall.
- 1845 John Whipple sells for \$5000 to William Jones King a certain lot of land bounded: S by College Street 70'; W by Truman Beckwith; N by Amasa Breck

and Betsy Waterman; E by grantor, it being the W end of the lot on which I now reside on College Street. . . Deed Book 91, 558.

- 1847 Dr William J King lived here. . . Providence Directory
- 1909 Property is taxed to the Industrial Trust Company, Richard A Robertson and H Martin Brown tr u/w William J King
- 1917 Zeta Psi Association of R I is taxed for this property
- 1946 Owned by Brown University

2. Date of erection: Probably built for Dr. King between 1845 when he bought the property and 1847 when he is listed at this address:
3. Notes on alterations and additions: The house was re-modeled in 1952 under the direction of the first floor occupants, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Whitcomb, to adapt it from its previous use as a fraternity to its present use with one apartment on the first floor and three on the second. The central hall and the principal rooms of the main block survive without apparent change. The northeast corner of the main block and the rear wing were altered in 1952 to allow a separate side entrance and stairway for the second floor apartments, and to furnish a modern kitchen for the first floor apartment in the rear wing, and a small apartment on the second floor of the rear wing.

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 frame house built in the 1840's. It is an example of the conservative handling of the Greek Revival in Providence with an Ionic entrance porch, corner pilasters, and characteristic interior trim.
2. Condition of fabric: Good

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Main block facing south, 46' (five-bay front) x 40', two-and-a-half stories; rear wing 21' wide x 32' deep, two stories.
2. Foundations: Field stone on inside, large cut blocks of stone on outside.
3. Wall construction: Clapboards. Paneled pilasters at the corners, continued around the corners showing two faces, molded Doric capitals with carved surfaces on the lower moldings. Roof cornice is part of a full entablature with architrave and frieze carried across pilasters.
4. Porches: One-story entrance porch with fluted Ionic columns at the front corners, full entablature. Back porch on west side of rear wing.
5. Chimneys: Four brick chimneys in outside walls of main block.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doors and doorways: Large paneled main door in entrance porch, doorway set back of deep pilaster responds of the porch columns. Doorway on east side opens to stair hall to second floor, added 1952.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Six over six light double hung windows, simple wood frames with slightly projecting molded lintels. No shutters.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape: Low pitched hip roof with large, low, lighted monitor.
  - b. Cornice: Full entablature with deeply projecting, molded cornice, and denticulated bed mold.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Central Hall plan. First floor: ceilings 11'-6" high, central hall 10' wide, large living room on southeast 16' x 28', parlor on southwest 16' x 18', bedroom on northwest (originally a dining room or parlor connected by double doors to southwest parlor) 16' x 18', original small bedroom at northeast corner of main block now entrance hall for side entrance, kitchen and service rooms in rear wing. Second floor: ceilings 10'-5" high, in main block originally four bedrooms each about 17'

square plus a small room 10' x 11' at the south end of the central hall above the entrance, now used for two apartments with the small room divided into two kitchens; small three-room apartment in rear wing on second floor. One room, used for storage, on third floor lighted by high windows in the monitor.

2. Stairways: Main stair in central hall, straight run, open string, open well, molded handrail, turned newel and balusters typical of Providence Greek Revival, sawn step end ornaments. Side stair, remodeled to serve second floor apartments.
  3. Flooring: Later hardwood, patterned flooring.
  4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster, painted or papered.
  5. Doors and doorways: Six panel doors. Flat sunk panels, flattened ogee Greek Revival moldings, doorways have paneled Doric pilasters and entablatures with cornices.
  6. Trim: Windows have pilaster trim and cornices to match doorways. Paneled folding interior shutters, paneled under-window aprons. Plaster cornices, molded on second floor, with denticulation and other decorative bands on first floor.
  7. Hardware: Silver plated, brass hardware.
  8. Lighting: Electric
  9. Heating, fireplaces: Central with radiators. Four black marble mantels, one story either with pilasters or moldings, mantel shelf in parlor supported on brackets.
- D. Site: Elevated high above sidewalk, entrance porch twenty steps above sidewalk, lot slopes from east down to west. Narrow lot, garden on west and in back on north.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect  
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