

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

For NPS use only

**National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received APR 10 1984

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Cornell-Randall-Bailey Roadhouse

and/or common The Log Gift and Curtain Shoppe

2. Location

street & number 2737 Hartford Avenue

not for publication

city, town Johnston

N.A. vicinity of

cong. dist. #2

Hon. Claudine Schneider

state Rhode Island

code 44

county Providence

code 007

3. Classification

Category

- district
- building(s)
- structure
- site
- object

Ownership

- public
 - private
 - both
- Public Acquisition**
- N.A. in process
 - being considered

Status

- occupied
 - unoccupied
 - work in progress
- Accessible**
- yes: restricted
 - yes: unrestricted
 - no

Present Use

- agriculture
 - commercial
 - educational
 - entertainment
 - government
 - industrial
 - military
- museum
 - park
 - private residence
 - religious
 - scientific
 - transportation
 - other:

4. Owner of Property

name Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Ursillo

street & number 8 Roger Road

city, town Johnston

N.A. vicinity of

state Rhode Island 02919

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Johnston Town Hall

street & number 1385 Hartford Avenue

city, town Johnston

state Rhode Island 02919

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Johnston, Rhode Island

has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1976, 1982

federal state county local

depository for survey records Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

150 Benefit Street

city, town Providence

state Rhode Island 02903

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Cornell-Randall-Bailey Roadhouse, 2737 Hartford Avenue, Johnston, is a two-and-a-half-story, gable-roofed, frame building, eight bays wide and four bays deep, that was built in two stages. The original house, built for Samuel Steere circa 1798, and now the western end of the building, is three bays wide with a side entrance and an internal brick chimney on the western end. The eastern section, five bays wide with a central doorway and an internal chimney at either end, was added circa 1833 when the property became Cornell's Tavern Stand. The house is vernacular with a Federal entrance and interior woodwork in the Steere house. The house has been renovated twice; first in 1896 after a period of neglect and again in 1976, when it was converted from a multiple-unit residence into a gift shop. In the first renovation, the original mantels, the eastern stairway, and front veranda were replaced. In the recent rehabilitation the veranda was built, a two-story warehouse wing was added on the rear and many of the internal partitions were removed.

The former hotel, which faces south across the Hartford Pike, is covered with clapboards and trimmed with corner boards and a box cornice with returns. The six-over-six double-hung sash windows have simple frames with projecting caps and bed molding; they also are fitted with new louvered wooden shutters that replicate the shutters found on the house in 1976. A historic photograph of the house shows twelve-over-twelve sash in some windows and six-over-six in the rest. This photograph, which was taken prior to the 1896 renovation, also shows a full-length veranda in front with square channeled posts. The present veranda is supported by wooden Doric columns of the same type that supported the smaller 1896 porch.

The doorway on the Steere house is composed of a new six-panel door, flanked by three-pane sidelights and framed by a fluted surround with square panels at the corners and a rectangular panel in the center of the transom. These panels and the similar ones under the sidelights have quadrants removed from their corners. The eastern entrance originally had a plain doorway with sidelights, but this was replaced in 1976 with a reproduction of the western doorway that incorporated the existing sidelights. This doorway design is a good example of the vernacular use of classical motifs in an imaginative rather than academically correct manner.

The interior plan is a composite of the side hall plan of the Steere house and the center hall plan of the 1833 addition. In the Steere house plan, the rear rooms are three and a half feet deeper than those of the front half (an unusual feature in a Federal era house), which creates a slight asymmetry in the gable roof.

Except in the rooms in the southwest, southeast and northeast corners, the partitions on the first story have been removed. A large showcase window has been installed in the east wall of the southwest room as well.

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1799, 1833, ca 1896
 1976

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Cornell-Randall-Bailey Roadhouse is significant to the history of architecture as a fairly well-preserved example of a commercial structure that served the needs of the turnpike traffic in the nineteenth century, and offered social-amusement activities to trolley traffic at the turn of the century. While such transportation related structures were common, they were never very numerous, and increasing development pressure, particularly twentieth-century road improvements, has resulted in the alteration or removal of many. Although the Cornell-Randall-Bailey Roadhouse has been altered in 1833, c. 1896, and 1976, it retains significant exterior and interior fabric as well as integrity of setting.

Historical Background

The Cornell-Randall-Bailey Roadhouse is located on the north side of heavily travelled Route 6-Hartford Pike in the western end of Johnston. Land records indicate that the present .95 acre property was once part of a 120 acre tract of land sold by Charles Comstock to Samuel Steere in 1798. Shortly afterwards, Steere erected a modest two and one-half-story frame dwelling, that, with subsequent enlargements, exists today. The country road running by the farm house was widened and improved in 1804-05 as the Rhode Island and Connecticut Turnpike.

After Samuel's death in 1826, his son, Hardin, acquired the property. He sold the farm in 1833 to Daniel and Amy Cornell of Gloucester, Rhode Island for \$4,000. Cornell proceeded to enlarge the house to its present 21-room size and converted it into a tavern. "Cornell's Tavern Stand" became a popular stagecoach stop and rooming house, serving the Turnpike and local traffic. At that time, the Providence and Hartford stages passed three times a day. After Cornell's death in 1847, his heirs sold the business to Henry and Margaret Angell for \$4,000.

To purchase the property, Angell received a mortgage from the heirs. He hoped to attract more business by constructing a "bowling saloon" on the property. However, upon failing to pay a \$500 promissory note, Angell was legally bound to sell the property at public auction in 1850. The successful bidder, Seril Cornell, sold the property to Stephen Randall the following year.

By the third quarter of the 19th century, the turnpike traffic had considerably diminished due to the establishment of the railroads, and in 1871 the Turnpike was made a free road by an Act of the General Assembly.

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Republican Herald - February 9, 1850
Providence Journal - July 14, 1901
Collier's Weekly - May 9, 1908

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property .95 acres

Quadrangle name North Scituate, R.I.

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A

1	9	2	8	7	5	7	0	4	6	3	4	1	2	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

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D

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Verbal boundary description and justification

The boundary for the Cornell-Randall-Bailey Roadhouse encompasses adjoining lots 184 and 222 on Johnston Assessor's plat 57. The lots include the resource and its immediate surroundings.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Michael Hebert/Cultural Resource Planner and
Richard Greenwood/Architectural Consultant

organization Wilbur Smith and Associates, Inc. date November, 1983

street & number 174 Wickenden Street telephone 401-751-5930

city or town Providence state Rhode Island 02903

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Thomas W. Williams*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date 3/23/84

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

John A. Byers Keeper of the National Register date 5/10/84

Attest:

Chief of Registration

date

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Continuation sheet ³

Item number 8

Page 2

Stephen Randall's son, Henry, sold the business to Frederick "Shang" Bailey in 1896 for a mere \$100. Shang Bailey (1842-1913), a native of Burrillville, Rhode Island, was a colorful character who once starred in P.T. Barnum's circus as the "Shanghai Giant" (Bailey was 6'7" tall).

Bailey's steps to revitalize the tavern's sagging business included transforming it into a bordello/gambling house. In addition, he paid corrupt police officials \$120.00 a year in order to sell liquor on Sunday. He also installed slot machines and provided entertainment for his patrons. In 1902 a trolley line was laid out along Hartford Pike between Providence and North Scituate, thereby making the roadhouse easily accessible to Providence patrons. Bailey's Roadhouse soon became well-known throughout southeast New England.

However, on February 27, 1905, Bailey experienced a sudden religious conversion. He immediately proceeded to empty his whole stock of liquor into the road, smashed his slot machines with an axe, and permanently closed his tavern. Thereafter, he held Sunday services in the building and became a well-known Christian evangelist. Oral history relates that his wife, Bella, though initially pleased at the change in her husband, soon had cause for regret as he depleted their savings by repaying everyone he had swindled--including the U.S. Government for \$2,000 in undeserved disability pension payments.

Bailey began selling off portions of the property in 1906. After his death, the old tavern was converted for multi-family occupancy and passed through a number of ownerships until 1976, when it was remodeled into a gift shop by the present owners.

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Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet 1

Item number 7

Page 2

In the former parlor and kitchen of the Steere house, the windows and their paneled aprons are framed by elaborate architraves with elliptical moldings and bull's-eye corner blocks. The doorways are treated in a similar fashion. The original single-flight stairway, which is also well-preserved, has a rounded rail and columnar newels of a dark wood with a natural finish, and slender square balusters. The riser ends are decorated with bracket-like scrollwork. The baseboard in these rooms and on the stair is capped with a simple cyma recta molding.

The five fireplaces on the first floor have elaborate Colonial Revival mantels with monochrome tile surrounds and hearths, as well as cast-iron fire boxes, which were installed c. 1896 by "Shang" Bailey. The eastern stairway, which is also a single flight, has an ogee-molded rail, massive turned newels and spindle balusters. The other woodwork in the eastern section includes a prominently molded chair rail in the northeast and southeast rooms, more severely molded window frames and plain baseboards, all of which seem to date from 1833.

While the plan of the second floor has been considerably altered in the western section, the layout of the rooms in the eastern half appears to be little changed. The latter rooms also retain their original trim, including chair rails in all four rooms, but all of the fireplaces have been covered up.

The garret, which has plastered walls and ceilings, is divided into one large and two small rooms. There is little evidence of any change in these rooms since the nineteenth century, except for the heating ducts installed in 1976.

The cellar, under the 1833 addition, has rubblestone masonry walls and two chimney supports. It contains the furnace and other utilities.

In the 1976 rehabilitation, a new heating system was installed with metal registers set in the floors and hot-air ducts built onto the walls on the first and second stories. New floors of carpet-covered plywood were also laid at this time, except in the former parlor, kitchen and the hall of the western section where the original wide pine planks survive, and in the northeast and southeast rooms on the first story, where there are hardwood floors from c. 1896.

There is a single-story, gable-roofed rear wing with an internal chimney, attached to and presumably coeval with the 1833 addition. The wing was converted into a separate apartment sometime in the twentieth

(See Continuation Sheet #2)

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Continuation sheet 2

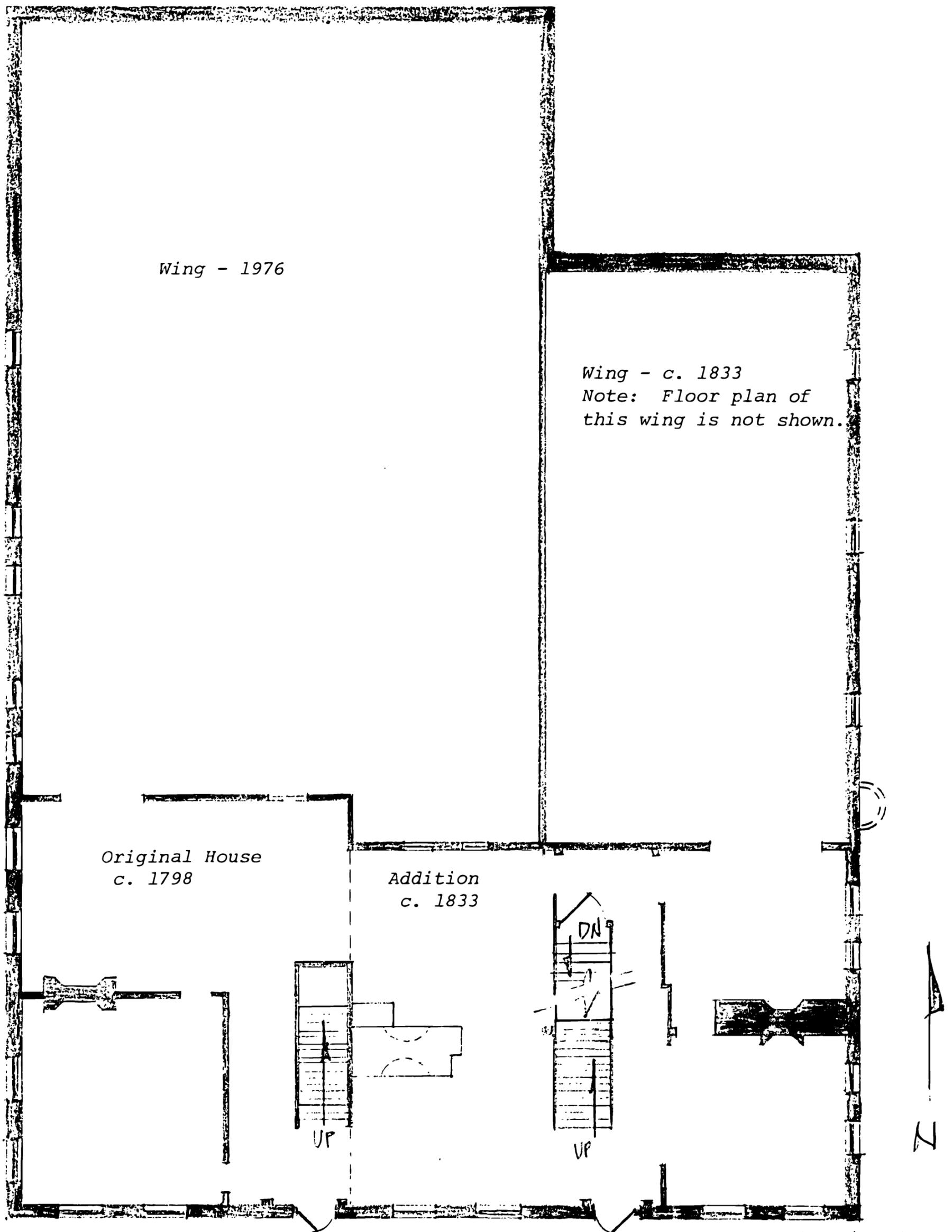
Item number 7

Page 3

century and it has been adapted for use as storerooms with few changes, except the removal of a side door on the east side.

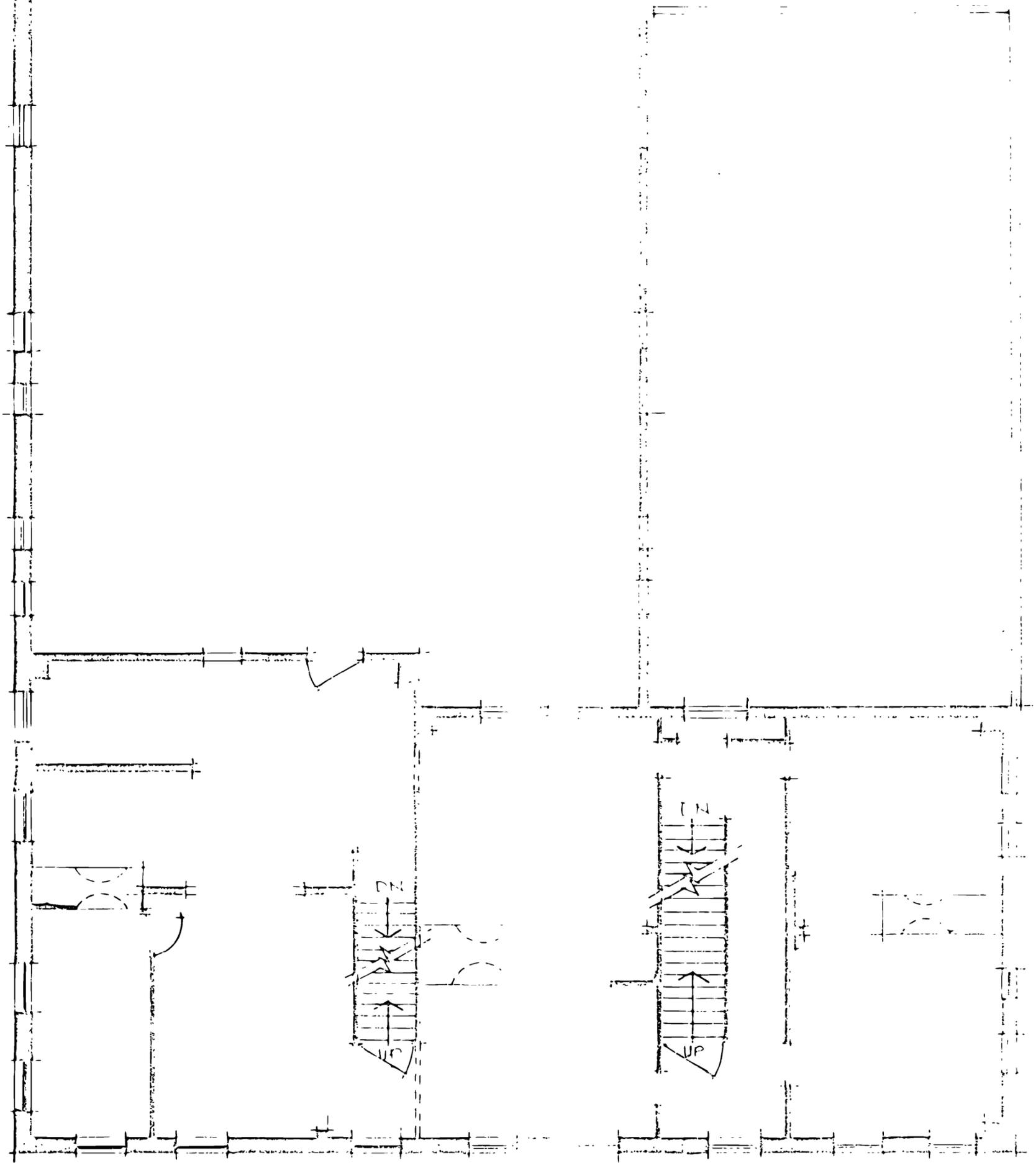
A large, two-story gable-roofed wing was built onto the western half of the house's north wall in 1976. This wing, which contains a showroom on the first story and a storeroom on the second, has vertical board siding and six-over-six, double-hung sash windows with louvered shutters. New double doorways were made in the rear wall of the house, on the first and second floors, to provide internal access to this wing.

Historic photographs of the house made in the late nineteenth century show the house surrounded by lawn, with a semi-elliptical driveway in front, a side driveway on the east and outbuildings to the north. Since 1976, the lawn on the west has been replaced with a paved parking lot; the semi-elliptical driveway disappeared with the widening of the Hartford Pike and the outbuildings have fallen down or been removed. A strip of grass with a large shade tree still stretches between the east side of the house and the side driveway.



Plan of First Floor, Cornell-Randall-Bailey-Roadhouse. Dotted lines indicate the locations of original features no longer extant - the east wall of the Steere House ; or visible - fireplaces and the side entrance to the 1833 wing.

Wing - 1976



Plan of Second Floor, Carnell-Randa Steere House; or visible - fireplace

-Boadhouse. Dotted line indicates the location of the original east wall of the Steere House, which is no longer extant - the east wall of the

NOT TO SCALE