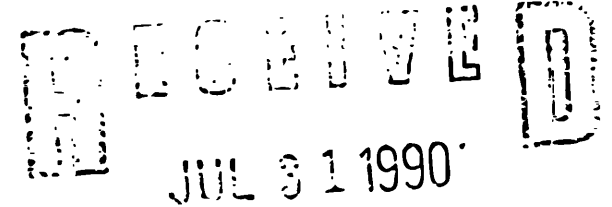


1347

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name: Burrows Block

other name/site number: _____

2. Location

street & number: 735-745 Westminster Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Providence vicinity: N/A

state: RI county: Providence code: R.I. zip code: 02903

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	buildings
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	sites
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	structures
<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this x nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property x meets does not meet the National Register Criteria.

 See continuation sheet.

Frederick C. Williamson
Signature of certifying official

25 July 1990
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

 See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

Entered in the
National Register

I hereby certify that this property is:

 ✓ entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

Alfred E. Zym

9/5/90

 determined eligible for the
National Register

 See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the
National Register

 removed from the National Register

 other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date
of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: COMMERCE/TRADE
SOCIAL

Sub: business, specialty store,
meeting hall

Current: COMMERCE/TRADE
SOCIAL

Sub: business, specialty store
meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

LATE VICTORIAN/Gothic

Other Description: _____

Materials:	foundation	<u>BRICK</u>	roof	<u>STONE/slate</u>
	walls	<u>BRICK</u>	other	<u>STONE</u>

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: local

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: 1880

Significant Dates: 1880

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X See continuation sheet.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than one

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>19</u>	<u>298920</u>	<u>4632200</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

The nominated property occupies Providence City Plat 29, lot 121.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

The boundary includes the entire City lot historically associated with the property.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Mark VanNoppen

Organization: Armory Revival Company Date: 1990

Street & Number: 35 Hammond Street Telephone: 401-272-2720

City or Town: Providence State: RI ZIP: 02909

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Description

The Burrows Block is a modest High Victorian Gothic commercial block. It almost fully covers its urban corner lot at the northwest corner of Dean and Westminster Streets, at the western edge of what was originally part of Downtown Providence before it was severed from the central business district by the construction of Interstate Highway 95. The building abuts a row of brick Victorian commercial buildings to the west, and a service alley accessible from Dean Street runs along the rear of the building.

The Burrows Block is three stories high, with an attic under a deck-on-hip-roof. A ten-foot square monitor sits atop the roof. The roof is punctuated by six chimneys, all much reduced in height; their original height and appearance is unknown. A trough gutter over a curved metal cornice rings the base of the roof. The five-bay, A-A-b-A-A-pattern brick façade has sandstone sills, lintels and stringcourse between the second and third story. The building's name carved in brownstone is centered on the façade between the second and third stories, and the date (1880) carved in sandstone is above the third-story windows. Windows are large, mostly original, two-over-two wood sash below multiple-pane transoms. The first floor has three storefronts, one on the east and two on the west of the central entrance to the upper stories. The eastern storefront, at 735 Westminster Street, renovated in the late 1920s, has a flat, copper cornice and a center recessed doorway. The western storefronts, at 743 & 745 Westminster Street, are both virtually original and retain recessed front doors with transom lights, cast-iron ornamental arches, pilasters framing plate-glass windows, and bracketed cornice. Ornamental iron doors were added in 1989 at the street line for security at each entrance. Wooden recessed paneling below the storefronts replaces windows which lit the basement before it was lit electrically. The four-bay b-A-A-A-pattern eastern elevation, on Dean Street, is articulated similar to façade. The storefront of 735 Westminster street fills the southernmost bay, and the cornice continues as a heavy granite beltcourse the depth of the building. At the eastern end of the north elevation is a cinder block stair tower (ca 1950) which serves as a second means of egress from the second and third floors of the building.

On the interior, the first-story shops are large open spaces that extend much of the depth of the building; offices and workrooms are at the rear (north) side of the building. The center entrance opens a wide flight of stairs that provide access to the upper stories. The stairs rise to the second floor hall that spans the middle of the building parallel to the façade and perpendicular to the stairs from the ground level. The second-story hall provides direct communication to the offices on that floor. A

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second staircase, located at the west end of the second floor hall, leads to the third floor. The center stair hall is remarkably intact and retains oak wainscotting with a walnut cap and base, walnut handrails and balusters on the stair to the third story, and molded plaster cornices. Stenciling approximately five feet from the floor was added in 1989. Painted wood-and-wire-glass doors lead from the second floor hall to nine rooms which form interconnecting office suites. The suites retain their original woodwork.

A small corridor leads from the center hall to the back stair tower. A kitchen/bath/utility room is tucked into the northwest corner of the second floor.

Originally the stair from the second to the third story led directly into a large meeting hall, which occupied the entire third floor. In the 1920s, a mezzanine was built above the stair and two small rooms were carved from the west end of the meeting hall. One is divided into a kitchen and a toilet; the other is an office. The large meeting hall, with a maple floor, remains. The mezzanine functioned as a bandstand for the high-ceiling ballroom. Today the mezzanine has been closed to accommodate local fire codes, but the 1920s plan remains physically intact. Painted pine wainscotting, plaster cornice, and four large ornamental ceiling vents (an early passive cooling system) have suffered only modest wear and tear. They have not been restored by the buildings' current owners, as the second floor has, but simply stabilized and painted.

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Significance

The Burrows Block is Providence's only known remaining example of a typical, though originally scarce, property type, the commercial block with shops on the first story, offices above, and a large meeting room on the top floor. Largely intact with original storefronts, it is unquestionably the best preserved commercial block in Providence from the 1880s.

As the only remaining example of the mixed-use commercial block form in Providence, the Burrows Block documents an important architectural type. As early as the late 1840s, Providence, like other developing urban centers, began to build multiple-use commercial blocks incorporating shops on the first story, offices above, and a meeting room on the top story. The earliest and perhaps best known of these was the Howard Building (1847; Thomas Tefft, architect). Destroyed by fire in 1853, the Howard Building was replaced in 1856—functionally at least—in kind by the second Howard Building, likewise destroyed by fire, in 1858, and replaced in kind in 1859. (The third Howard Building was replaced by a modern office building in 1957-59.) The form provided space not only for the usual retail and office activities of the central business district, at a time when that concept was becoming defined, but also for the many lectures, recitations, concerts, dances, and organizational meetings, at a time when clubs and other organizations were rapidly proliferating as the middle class expanded.

The building originally housed offices for Burrows and Kenyon, a large lumber company founded in 1836; the company remained here until November 1919 but retained ownership of the building until 1945. By 1892,¹ the tenants included, in addition to the lumber company, purveyors of hardware and furnishings in the two storefronts and a dentist, a tailor, and a dressmaker in the upstairs offices. Later occupants plied similar trades.

¹1892 was the first year that a house directory, listing occupants building by building, was published for Providence.

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Major Bibliographical References

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Providence House Directory. 1892-1900.

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Survey of Historic Resources. Providence, 1986.