

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name: Allen, Zachariah House

other name/site number: N/A

2. Location

street & number: 1093 Smith Street

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Providence vicinity: N/A

state: RI county: Providence code: 007 zip code: 02908

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

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

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

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

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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 P. Williamson

Signature of certifying official

1 Aug 1994
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

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register

Edson H. Beall

Entered in the National Register 9/15/94

other (explain):

[Signature]

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic: Domestic/Single Dwelling

Sub:

Current: Domestic/Single Dwelling

Sub:

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7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Georgian

Federal

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation Granite

roof Asphalt Shingle

walls Weatherboard

other _____

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: locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): N/A

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: 1789

Significant Dates: c 1789

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Allen, Amos

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

X See continuation sheet.

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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 acre (.8)

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>19</u>	<u>296680</u>	<u>4635150</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Timothy J.G. Kennedy/Co-Owner, and Richard Greenwood & Wm McKenzie Woodward, RIHPC

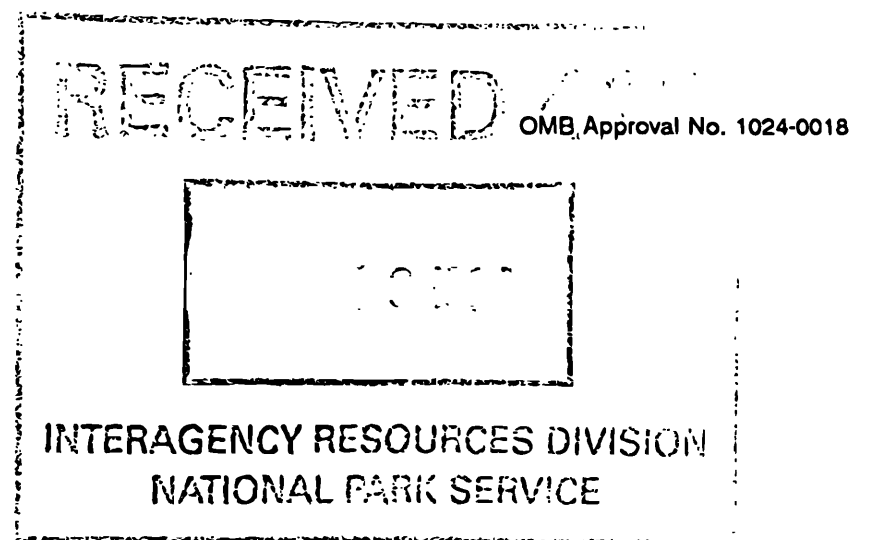
Organization: N/A Date: 2/14/94

Street & Number: 1093 Smith Street Telephone: 277-2678

City or Town: Providence State: RI ZIP: 02908

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Description

Located in northwest Providence, the Zachariah Allen House is a late 18th-century house on an ample lot in the dense, early twentieth-century residential neighborhood of Elmhurst/Mount Pleasant. It stands at the intersection of a main thoroughfare, Smith Street, and a residential street, Modena Avenue.

The Allen House is a wood-frame, two-and-one-half-story, center-chimney, five-bay-facade flank-gable house. A typical, conservative late Georgian dwelling, it remains remarkably intact, including its original form, architectural details, and materials. The house stands on a granite, regular course, quarry-face ashlar foundation pierced on secondary elevations by narrow, encased, eight-light windows. It has most of its original clapboards with feathered edges and wrought nails. All corners are finished with decorative quoins. Windows are double-hung six-over-six-pane sash, and the first-story and attic windows have splayed lintels and carved keystones. The second-story windows on the front and rear are mitred out around the cornice line. Exterior window shutters have been removed and cataloged for future restoration and replacement, but the shutter hardware remains on the window surrounds. A dentil-and-crown-molding eaves cornice circumscribes the building. The gable ends project beyond the side walls, and the raking cornice of the gable ends is identical to the eaves cornice. The central (only) chimney is composed of brick. The roof is covered with asphalt shingles.

The five-bay facade has a projecting entrance vestibule with a modillion pediment above an eight-panel door. The door is flanked by fluted engaged Ionic pilasters and rustication. The vestibule is likely a later addition. Above the vestibule is an off-center second-story window in the central bay.

The side and rear elevations have irregular fenestration patterns. The east elevation has three regularly placed windows on the first story and three windows on the second story. The north elevation has a secondary entrance converted from an original window at its eastern end; documentary evidence shows that later additions once projected from this elevation but have since been removed. The west elevation has three unequal bays with a secondary entrance in the center bay; this door has an original five-light transom.

The interior follows the standard center-chimney, five-room-plan format. The principal stairs are in front of the chimney; secondary stairs, in the northwest corner. The three-run front stair against the

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curved chimney wall has turned newel posts, acorn pendants, and a closed stringer with heavy torus molding.

On the first floor, the east parlor and the dining room, on the northeast corner, have more elaborate detail, including dentil cornices mitred around the cased corner posts. Both front parlors have two-story mantels; that in the east parlor has fluted pilaster strips in the overmantel. The kitchen, at rear, is modern.

On the second floor, the front rooms remain largely unaltered while the rear has been reconfigured. The two front chambers have original doors, hardware, fire boxes, and two-story mantels, cornice moldings, and wide pine flooring.

The attic contains two finished bedrooms on the east end with flooring, wall sheathing and ceiling boards, all of hand-planed pine. The portion of the attic space around the chimney shows original hand-hewn roofing boards and rafter system, numbered with Roman numerals and pierced with uncut pegs.

The Allen House retains a significant amount of original detail. Modifications to the interior in the 1920s or 1930s include installing hardwood floors throughout the first floor, modernizing the kitchen, closing the rear fireboxes and removing mantels on both floors, and installing the second floor bathroom. Further work in the 1980s and early 1990s includes remodeling the kitchen, installing the first floor bathroom, and renovating the second floor bathroom. These modifications were minor and did not significantly compromise the integrity of the house.

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Photographs

3. Photographer: Timothy J.G. Kennedy
4. Date: February, 1994
5. Location of negatives: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

The above information applies to all photos.

6. View of photo #:

1. View of exterior, looking north.
2. View of exterior front door, looking north.
3. View of exterior rear elevation, looking southwest.
4. View of interior front hall and stairway.
5. Fireplace in southeast chamber.
6. Fireplace in southwest chamber.
7. Southwest corner of northeast room, showing door, cornice and cornerpost.

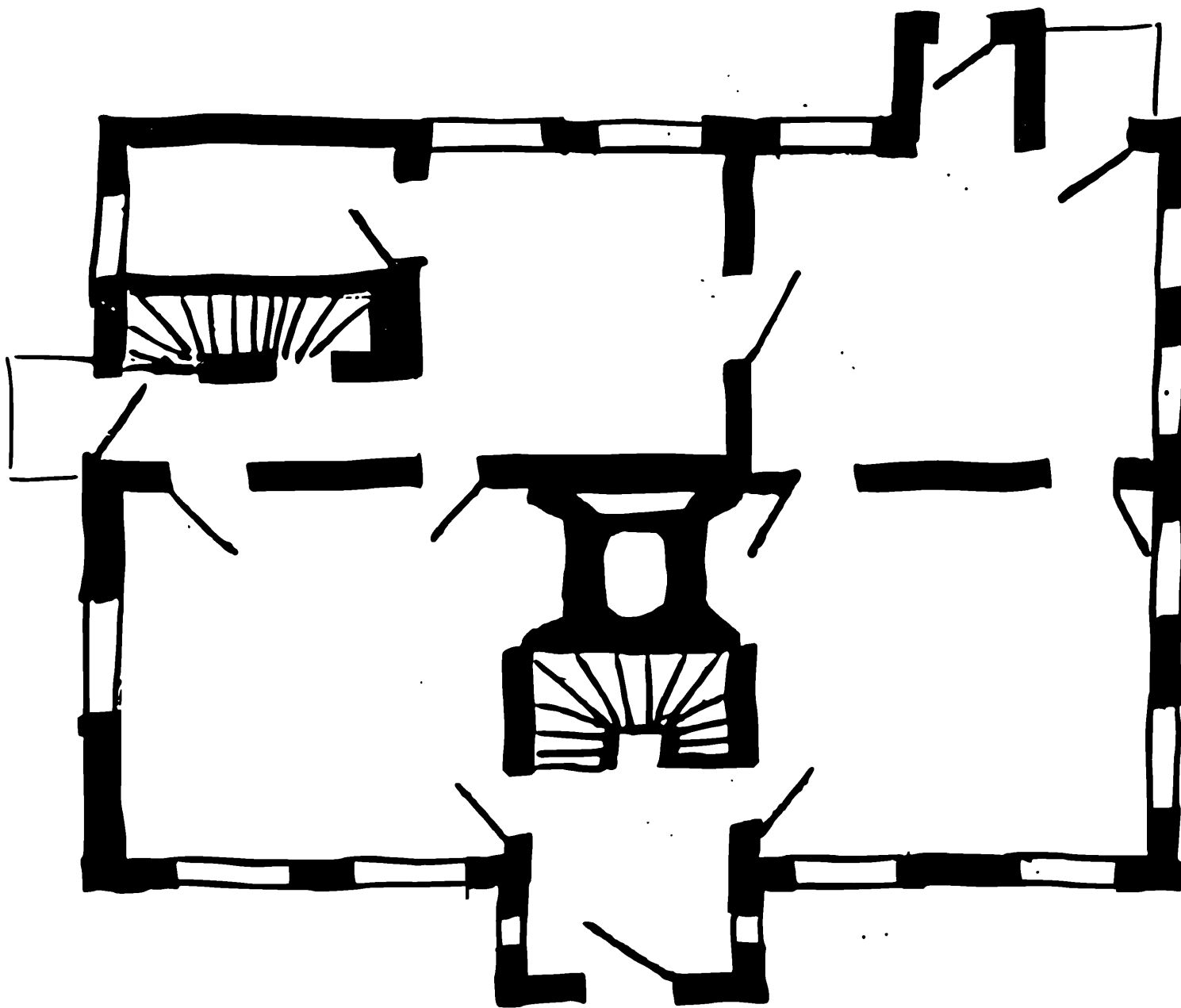
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First floor
Sketch plan not to scale

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Significance

The Zachariah Allen House is significant as a well-preserved example of late eighteenth-century rural domestic architecture. The house exhibits a relatively ornate late Georgian style which exemplifies its origins as a country seat for a prosperous Providence merchant. Although its historic rural agricultural setting has been supplanted by early twentieth-century residential development, the Zachariah Allen House retains the integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling and association to satisfy National Register Criterion C at the local level.

The Zachariah Allen House was built for Zachariah Allen c. 1789; the design and construction of the house is attributed to his elder brother, Amos Allen, a Providence housewright.¹ The construction of this house on an extensive farm in what was then the North Providence countryside came at a time when Allen (1740-1801) was enjoying considerable success as a merchant in Providence. In partnership with his brother Philip, he had ships engaging in trade in the Caribbean and across the Atlantic, as well as a wharveside distillery and cooperage in Providence. Although conservative in style, the Allen house was one of the outstanding examples of high style architecture built in North Providence in the eighteenth century.

Allen's principal residence was in Providence on North Main Street (it has since been relocated to 1 Benefit Street) and the North Providence house was apparently constructed to provide the family with a country retreat as well. The autobiographical writings of Allen's second son, Zachariah, Jr., describe weekend trips out to the farm during his boyhood. The farm, which encompassed more than two hundred acres amassed through land acquisitions beginning in 1777, was also a source of country produce; the younger Allen's reminiscences indicate that a tenant farmer managed the farm for the family.²

The farm remained in the Allen family after Zachariah, Sr.'s, death in 1801. The house and part of the associated acreage passed into Zachariah, Jr.'s, hands until it was sold out of the family in 1839. His brother Philip held the remainder, on which he built his own house, which still survives in an altered condition at 196 Nelson Street.

¹ Antoinette Downing, Early Homes of Rhode Island, p. 310.

² Autobiographical Essay, Zachariah Allen MSS Collection, RIHS.

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At the time the Allen house was built, the surrounding neighborhood was a lightly-settled rural district devoted to farming. One of the few roads across the town ran in front of the house; this road was improved as part of the Powder Mill Turnpike (1810-1815), one of the major highways connecting Providence with the northwestern hinterland. Even with this improvement in transportation, the farm and its environs remained largely rural and agricultural through the nineteenth century. However, in the early twentieth century Providence's suburban residential development claimed these erstwhile farmlands. The Allen property retained its rural character until 1917 when the last thirty-six acres were subdivided and the house was set off on its current lot.

It is possible that the land surrounding the Zachariah Allen House may contain archaeological resources. No testing or study has been done, but the possible presence of underground resources should be taken into account before the land is disturbed.

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Major Bibliographical References

Agnew, Dorothy. "New life for a Landmark." Providence Journal. March 5, 1950.

Allen, Zachariah. Autobiographical Essay. Zachariah Allen MSS Collection, Rhode Island Historical Society.

Downing, Antoinette Forrester. Early Rhode Island Homes. Richmond, VA: Garrett and Massie, 1937.

Greenwood, Richard. (Unpublished history/biography of Zachariah Allen, Jr.). 1994.

Leonelli, Renato E., et al. Beginnings: Commemorating the History of the Area. Providence, RI: 1986.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee McAlester. A Field Guide to American Houses. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.

Preservation Cooperative Ltd. Building Analysis for the Zachariah Allen House, c1789. Unpublished, 1993.

Woodward, William McKenzie and Edward F. Sanderson. Providence: A Citywide Survey of Historic Resources. Providence, RI: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, 1986.

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Boundary Description and Justification

The boundary of the property nominated is described as Providence Tax Assessor's Plat 122, Lot 36.

The boundary of the property nominated is justified as the remaining portion of land historically associated with the property. Originally a two-hundred-acre parcel, the Allen Farm was gradually subdivided, most recently in 1917, when the property associated with the house was diminished to the present lot on which it stands.