

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 22 1980
DATE ENTERED MAR 3 1980

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

A.F. Cappelli Block

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

263-265 Atwells Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Providence

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

#2 Edward P. Beard

STATE

Rhode Island

CODE

44

COUNTY

Providence

CODE

007

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- 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

Forum Associates c/o Richard C. Tallo

STREET & NUMBER

1239 Hartford Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Johnston

VICINITY OF

Rhode Island 02919

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

City Hall

STREET & NUMBER

25 Dorrance Street

CITY, TOWN

Providence

STATE

Rhode Island 02903

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

The West Side, Providence

DATE

May, 1976

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

CITY, TOWN

Providence,

Rhode Island

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input 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

Located at the corner of Atwells Avenue and DePasquale Square in Providence's Federal Hill section, the A. F. Cappelli Block is a four-story unit of load-bearing masonry construction with heavy timber framing. Forty feet wide by one-hundred feet long, its bays are arranged in an eight to three ratio. The south and west facades of the building face the street, and are faced with red brick laid in common bond. Tan brick is used for quoining at the corners.

The ground floor houses the commercial enterprises of the building. The floor is divided into two stores, the larger of which opens onto Atwells Avenue. Cast-iron store fronts are still in place. Knee walls have been restored to their original height of three feet. The upper three stories, designed for residential use, are identical in appearance. There are seven apartments in the building, six of which are duplexes. Fenestration is organized in uniform vertical rows; however, the projecting rows of bay windows are positioned asymmetrically on the west elevation. The south elevation has one projecting bay group located in the center, flanked by a single, vertical row of windows to the right and double row to the left. In contrast to the projecting metal-sheathed bays which feature geometric diamond motifs, ornamental striation, and a strong horizontal subdivision, the windows flush with the wall are given a more severe treatment, emphasizing the flat wall plane. The openings are cut crisply into the wall. Flat, brick arches punctuated by slender keystones substitute for lintels. On the west elevation narrow mullions separate double groups of windows. A diamond motif continues on the frieze above the fourth floor, the geometric design of which serves to accentuate the pattern of fenestration. Bracketed, ornamental cornice in excellent condition and a low parapet wall cap the entire composition. Block-like elements which rest on top of the parapet at the corners add solidity to the building and further help to enframe the facade. The name of the building's proprietor and the date of completion appear prominently in cast stone on the topmost sections of the south and west sides, respectively.

Since the Cappelli Block is adjacent on two sides to other commercial structures, the north and east walls cannot be seen from the street, and never were intended to be. Thus, these elevations are devoid of ornamentation and receive only perfunctory fenestration for ventilation purposes.

The seventy-year-old building is presently undergoing extensive renovation work and the interior has been gutted. Original supporting members and firewalls remain, but the walls have been stripped to their brick foundation, to remain as finished walls.

See continuation sheet 1

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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The ground floor ceiling has been lowered to accommodate a new ventilation system. The original tin ceiling is in an advanced state of deterioration. The street floor of small hexagonal tile remains. Old paint has been sandblasted from the cornice and baywindows, and they have been repainted a dark brown. The original window frames are extant, and have been reglazed.

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/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES	1909	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Antonio F. Cappelli
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The A. F. Cappelli Block is important for its contribution to the commercial and architectural heritage of the Federal Hill community. The building is a significant example of the mixed-use building type associated with the development of the neighborhood's commercial district.

The Cappelli family came to America from Italy during the wave of immigration of the 1890's. Antonio and his brother, Niccolo, settled in Providence's Federal Hill section, a growing community of Italian immigrants and first-generation Italian Americans. The two brothers opened a wholesale wine and liquor business on Atwells Avenue, then and now the principal commercial thoroughfare on Federal Hill. After a few years the brothers opened their own separate stores. Antonio moved down the street to the northeast corner of Atwells and Arthur Avenues and constructed his own building to house his expanding business. The "Importer and Jobber" of "Wines, Liquors, and Olive Oil" (1911 advertisement) later diversified into the real estate business and became one of the principal builders in the Federal Hill area. After Prohibition put an end to the legitimate liquor business, the Cappelli Block housed other enterprises integral to the community, including successive grocery stores, pharmacies, and meat markets. After 1933 Cappelli remained in the real estate business.

The Cappelli Building is a good example of the mixed-use commercial block built at the turn of the century. Commercial activities were situated on the ground floor; offices and apartments were located above. The simplicity and logic of this type of building design is only beginning to be appreciated fully today. In its renovated state the Cappelli Block will retain its mixed-use character.

In an area of primarily clapboarded, balloon-framed, two and three-story structures, the masonry built Cappelli Block distinguishes itself among its neighbors. By today's standards a four-story structure is not particularly tall, but in the Federal Hill of 1909 it was, and is today, one of the tallest buildings in the area.

See continuation sheet 2

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Providence City Directories, 1900-1970

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than one

UTM REFERENCES

A	1 9	2 98 41 10	4 63 2 80 10
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			

B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Plat 28, Lot 363

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Howard Maurer, Consultant

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission December 1979

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

150 Benefit treet

401-277-2670

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Providence,

Rhode Island 02903

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

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

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

Frederick Williamson

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

January 4, 1980

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Bill Lelovich

DATE 3/30/80

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: *Ames ...*

DATE 2/25/80

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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In late nineteenth century fashion the building's height is expressed by the use of the base-shaft-capital system of proportions. From the ground floor store fronts of ornamental metal work rises a shaft of three identical stories. The strong horizontal subdivision of the bay windows, in turn, divides the shaft into "layers." The projecting cornice then serves as the capital of a column and finishes the composition.

The Cappelli Block demonstrates a modest, yet skillful and richly detailed solution to the problem of the small-scale commercial building. In its newly renovated state the Cappelli Building recalls the day of the thriving downtown commercial district and reflects the recent revival of the Federal Hill neighborhood.