

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED APR 7 1975  
DATE ENTERED MAY 21 1975

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC Hope Block/<sup>and</sup>Cheapside ~~Historic District~~  
*see control sheet*

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER 22-26 and 40 North Main Street

CITY, TOWN Providence

STATE Rhode Island

VICINITY OF CODE 44

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT (1 St. Germain)  
COUNTY Providence CODE 007

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Multiple

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

VICINITY OF

STATE

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. City Hall

STREET & NUMBER Dorrance and Washington Streets

CITY, TOWN Providence

STATE Rhode Island

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Rhode Island Statewide Survey

DATE 1973

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

CITY, TOWN Providence

STATE Rhode Island

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED    DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

One of Providence's major commercial districts throughout the nineteenth century was an area called "Cheapside," located immediately north of the colonial market place. Today, only two buildings remain as evidence of the development of this area in the Victorian era: the Hope Block, 22-26 North Main Street, a Second Empire brick structure (1873); and the adjacent Cheapside Block, 40 North Main Street, built by the firm of Stone and Carpenter in the High Victorian Gothic style (1880).

The Hope Block is located on the west side of North Main Street with Drowne Street on the south and the Cheapside Block to the north. It is a brick and granite structure of four stories including Mansard with a five-bay facade in a two-one-two pattern. Constructed in 1873 by an architect still unknown, its composition is sufficiently general to make an attribution to any known architect of the day difficult. However, the building is one of a few survivors of the many Second Empire style commercial structures erected in Providence between 1866 and 1875.

The street level of the Hope Block retains its original cast iron decoration with more recent plate glass windows between. Four stop-fluted Corinthian pilasters delimit the ends of the building and frame the central door. The cast iron lintel is undecorated except for a line of dentilling at the cornice.

The second and third stories of the facade are constructed of a fine-grade smooth brick with granite band courses, window sills, and keystones. Double-window projecting pavillions flank a center bay of one window. All of the windows are two-over-two sash and rounded at the top. A granite band course immediately above the cast iron street level serves as the sill for second story windows. Both middle stories are decorated by heavy granite keystones and a narrow granite band course at the springing of the arches for the round top windows. A horizontal granite band with the name "Hope Block" separates the second and third floors in the central section, and this wide band is carried across the projecting pavillions.

Above the third story, the brick wall facade is replaced by a slate Mansard roof with wooden trim. The two shallow side pavillions culminate in projecting units of battered form. The double windows below are here replaced by one wide window, still two-over-two sash, but with a segmental top. The roof pavillions are framed in wood and decorated by a series of rosettes and rope moldings at the corners. The central window in the Mansard has an arched form like those below and is outlined here by a wide wooden molding. At the top, an overhanging cornice is supported by modillions and decorated with inset panels along the bottom. A line of dentils separate the cornice from the slate roof.

The Drowne Street facade, along the south, is finished in a rough brick, but follows the general fenestration pattern of the main facade. Square windows illuminate the first story, while arched forms exist above. The side silhouette

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of the roof resembles a salt-box shape, being a gable, flank to the street, that is truncated at the front by the Mansard.

Although the Cheapside Block is a more sophisticated piece of architecture, its designer was sensitive to perpetuating the scale of the earlier Hope Block. Cheapside, also a four-story brick structure with granite and cast iron articulation, was a product of one of the major architectural firms of the period, Stone and Carpenter. It represents the mature High Victorian Gothic style in Providence commercial architecture.

Cheapside's designer, Alfred Stone (1834-1908), subtly organized the composition to express verticality. The ground level is divided into two large open units for shops, with the general building entrance in the section to the left. On the three upper levels, changes in fenestration enliven the facade and augment the vertical thrust of the building. On the second story, two groups of a wide window flanked by two slightly narrower windows repeat the basic two-part solidity of the ground floor. At the same time, the second story pattern provides a transition to the composition of the top two floors--pairs of narrow windows on the outside and double larger windows in the center. Thus, the composition is modeled from two equal parts to a definite central focus. Polished marble colonnettes in the centers of the third and fourth levels reinforce this development.

The cast iron work of the first story is complex and fascinating. Mimicking the adjacent Hope Block, three ground level piers are grooved in a manner to suggest fluting. Above the fluting, the piers are decorated by bands of raised rosettes and inset panels of rosettes, stylized palmette leaves, guttae and oblong pendants. Open work brackets of foliate design support a simple cast iron lintel distinguished by two long horizontal panels with raised moldings. The two outside piers serve as the bases for buttress-like elements that extend, in brick, up the edges of the facade and break through the line of the cornice.

Above the street level, the facade is vitalized by several Victorian Gothic characteristics: rough and carved granite insets, patterned brickwork, wooden panels of cut-out decoration, and colorful tiles. The windows of the second and third levels are surmounted by wooden panels with battered sides. Rough granite blocks enframe these areas. The wooden panels contain cut-out, flat, stylized foliage, which is simpler in the third level than the second. The use of pattern in brick, well illustrated by this building, includes laying bricks in a diagonal pattern, pointing corners towards the front, recessing bricks to create shadow patterns, and corbelling. A polished marble colonnette with Romanesque capital is supported on a bracket between the center windows in the upper two levels.

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The fourth story is composed of three pointed dormers over the double window groups. The central dormer contains a pointed Gothic arch over the two central windows. To either side, the double windows are capped by a heavy stone lintel and a segmental brick arch above. Colored tiles (in blue, orange and black) are used to crown the compositions: one in the center of each side dormer and a group of four in the central dormer. The roof line is emphasized by a wide stone course in which quantrefoil designs are carved. This cornice is broken by the top of the central dormer and the extensions of the buttress elements at the edges.

The exposed Amos Street elevation, on the north, shows regular fenestration and is decorated by simple brick corbelling in the cornice.

# 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 checked="" 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

1874, 1880

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Stone and Carpenter

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Hope Block and Cheapside Building are the only remnants of a once prosperous commercial district and two of the best extant examples of Victorian commercial architecture in Providence. From the early nineteenth century, Cheapside was the name given to the commercial district running along the west side of Main Street, north from the eighteenth century Market House to the First Baptist Meeting House. The Cheapside area was the dry goods center for Providence and businesses like Watson and Gladding (later B. H. Gladding and Company) were initiated here as early as 1805. As evidenced by these two buildings, the district was still flourishing at the end of the nineteenth century.

In addition to their significance for local commercial history, the Hope Block and Cheapside are noteworthy examples of the city's popular architectural styles. Differing in quality, the two structures represent the decline of the Second Empire style, popular in Providence from 1866 to 1875, and the succeeding High Victorian Gothic, a style that held sway from 1875 into the 1890's. Similarly, the buildings present the range from the anonymous and simple Hope Block to the more nervously exciting Cheapside, a work of the prominent Stone and Carpenter office.

The Hope Block, constructed in 1873, is a rather vernacular extraction of contemporary buildings modeled on the stylistic dictates of France's Second Empire. Its high style prototype, represented in Providence by the Butler Exchange (Arthur Gilman, 1872) and the Providence City Hall (S. J. Thayer, 1875), is characterized by a highly plastic composition of projecting pavillions, series of columns, topped by a Mansard roof with cast iron cresting. With the exception of the two buildings above, Providence did not achieve a high style interpretation of the Second Empire style. The Hope Block is distinguished by projecting pavillions and a Mansard roof, its only real hallmarks of the Second Empire style. Basically, however, the extreme regularity, use of hard brick and block lettering strongly ties the building to mid-century forms.

Cheapside is a much finer example of Providence's commercial architecture. In general, the work done during the High Victorian Gothic style here was more sophisticated than the Second Empire developments. The period marked the ascendancy of two major offices---Stone and Carpenter (later Stone, Carpenter and Willson) and W. R. Walker. Providence was introduced to the High Victorian Gothic style in

See continuation sheet 3

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Grossman, Elizabeth Greenwell. "The Victorian Commercial Architecture of Downtown Providence, 1848-1890." Unpublished Master's Thesis, Brown University, 1973.  
 Cady, John Hutchins. The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence, 1636-1950. Providence: Akerman Standard Press, 1957.  
 Onorato, Ronald. "Stone, Carpenter and Willson: An Analysis of and Architectural Firm, 1858-1908." Unpublished Independent Study Project, Brown University, Department of Art, 1973.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,9	2,9,9,9,3,0	4,6,3,3,0,9,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Keith N. Morgan, Museum Specialist

ORGANIZATION

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

DATE

March 26, 1973

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Providence

STATE

Rhode Island

## 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.

SIGNATURE

*Frederick C. Williams*

4/1/75

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

*Ernest A. Connally*

DATE MAY 21 1975

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

*[Signature]*

DATE 5/20/75

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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the Wilcox Building, 1875, designed by Edwin O. Howland. Stone and Carpenter's first exercise in this style was the flamboyant Dorrance Hotel, 1878, next to the site of the new Providence City Hall. Cheapside was the only other Victorian Gothic commercial building by the firm and the only one now extant.

Thus, from both an historical and an architectural point of view, these buildings are evidence of the commercial development in the city. Their adaptive reuse is certainly feasible and should be encouraged. Because of their key geographic location, the structures are essential to the visual fabric of the city and the historic context of economic growth.

In the twentieth century, expansion into this area by the Rhode Island School of Design has changed the land use pattern from commercial to institutional. In 1955, the Hope Block was acquired by the State of Rhode Island. During the 1974 elections, a referendum calling for, among other things, demolition of the Hope Block was defeated by the voters. Only if both buildings can be maintained and given a vital function will this evidence of Providence's past survive.