

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**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 LIPPITT (GOVERNOR HENRY) HOUSE

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER 199 Hope Street

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Providence

\_\_ VICINITY OF

First

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 199 Hope Street Corporation, c/o Edwards & Angell, Attorneys

STREET & NUMBER

15 Westminster Street

CITY, TOWN

Providence

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Rhode Island 02903

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

City Hall

STREET & NUMBER

Dorrance Street at Washington Street

CITY, TOWN

Providence

STATE

Rhode Island 02903

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE

1962

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington, D.C.

STATE

# 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		

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

A large brick house with a three-bay west front of 60 feet by a main block of 75 feet with a projecting center bay on front and semicircular bay on the south side. There is a large two story wing on the east. The foundations are regular ashlar brownstone with wall construction of brick with brownstone quoins on the first floor which continue as slightly projecting brick pilasters on upper two floors, which meet similar brick entablature under cornice, enframing walls. There are double brownstone belt courses between first and second floors with balusters under the windows simulating balconies.

The semicircular entrance porch has Corinthian columns, fluted and cabled; entablature with balustrade, modillion cornice, and carved frieze. Porte-cochere on north side with paneled square columns, paneled entablature, cornice similar to roof cornice, but with balustrade.

The roof is hipped except for a projecting center bay on the west front, the doors are paneled double doors with paneled jambs and transom light above. The windows are four over four light double hung windows. Molded brownstone frames, sills on brackets, cornices on first and second floors, segmental heads on third floor. There are tri-partite windows on second floor over main entrance porch, brownstone trim with Corinthian columns and pilasters, frieze similar to porch below, pediment over central window.

Floor plans: L-shape central hall leading west to front door and north to porte-cochere--stairway in north leg of the hallway. Three rooms on south side, reception room, library with curved bay, dining room--all open to hall and connected by double doors. Large drawing room on northwest, billiard room at northeast, kitchen in rear wing. Central hall 11' 4" wide, first floor ceiling 13' high. Bedrooms on upper floors.

Stairways: U-shape with landings, 54' wide, 13' treads, 6-1/2" risers, closed string, heavy railing with molded rail, turned balusters, carved and paneled newels.

There are patterned hardwood floors, elaborate paneled wainscoting in most rooms and highly decorated painted plaster walls. The original gas fixtures are intact, converted to electricity.

The original carpenters' contract exists--Mrs. Antoinette Downing has transcribed the following:

### Lumber Contract

Framing lumber--spruce, pine, hemlock, chestnut.  
Finish lumber--clear pine, hard pine, oak, cherry, curled maple, black walnut, ash, rock maple, butternut.

(continued)

# 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 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 c. 1862-65

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Henry Childs

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A remarkably well preserved example of a mid-19th century revival style, this Italian villa is the most elaborate of a grouping of mansions constructed by rich Providence merchants. The Lippitt house is the best preserved example in the East Side district and was built by the distinguished Henry Lippitt, at one time Governor of Rhode Island. Elaborately furnished, retaining most of its original appointments, the house is an outstanding example of its period and style.

The Italian Villa or Italianate style was another imported architectural fashion like the Greek and Gothic and part of what Fiske Kimball called "America's yearning for the picturesque." This irregular, coarsely detailed style flourished in mid century and was favored by architects such as Notman (1810-1865), Alexander Jackson Davis (1803-1892) and especially Henry Austin (1804-1891). The first published examples of this free Tuscan vernacular in America were in Downing's books (1841). Remarkably free in design, these houses are usually dominated by a high tower, irregular window placement, rectangular plans usually with grand interior stairs. Downing himself described Italian Villas as "pleasing to discriminating persons because it is highly irregular, with great picturesqueness and variety."

According to John Maass the Italianate Villa was by far the most influential house type developed during the Victorian era. Almost all later detached American houses have adopted some of its features. The villa was "designed from the inside out" as symmetry was not desired, the rooms could be scaled and grouped by function. The effect was said to be "elegant variety" and the message of the villa was clearly: "This is the rich but not gaudy home of a gentlemen of taste and culture."

Henry Lippitt was born in Providence in 1818 and made a fortune in textile manufacturing, as President of the Lippitt Woolen Company. He was active in civic affairs, particularly the Opera House Association. Lippitt was governor of Rhode Island in 1875 and 1876 represented the state at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia.

This house is somewhat restrained compared to other villas, perhaps because its builder, architect Henry Childs, was somewhat conservative. Compared to the sober exterior, the interior is lavish and colorful. The decoration is magnificent, employing many varieties of wood, many types of marble, important chandeliers and specially designed hardware, painting and graining of walls and ceilings, stencilling,

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CONTINUATION SHEET Lippitt House ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 2

Finish for rooms:

Drawing room--light woods, rock maple, poplar or other white wood with black walnut or butternut mouldings.

Reception room--maples, rock and curled with panels of Byrds Eye, etc.

Library--black walnut with black cherry mouldings.

Dining Room--oak or butternut with cherry mouldings and panels.

Billiard Room--ash stiles, chestnut panels and cherry mouldings.

Main Hall and Stairways 1st and 2nd floor--light and dark western oak with butternut or black walnut mouldings.

Doors on 1st floor--black walnut stiles, maple panels, butternut mouldings.

Doors on 2nd and 3rd floors--ash, with chestnut panels or all chestnut and cherry mouldings.

Spare chamber--all black walnut chamber.

Chamber room over the Billiard Room--maple and black walnut mouldings.

Sewing Room--cherry with ash or chestnut panel, etc.

All other rooms on 2nd floor--chestnut with black walnut mouldings.

All the closets and rooms on 3rd floor and closets on 2nd ditto and addition building--chestnut.

Kitchen and closet and back entry--hard pine.

Butling room and water closet--ash and black walnut.

Marble for mantels--rose Pyrenees marble; black marble; statuary marble Louis 16th style for dining room; Lisbon marble, red spots; pink Vermont marble; green Vermont marble.

Final contract dated May 1865 for the two stained glass windows at the stair landings with William Gibson, corner Broadway and 13th Streets, New York.

From Historic American Buildings Survey report, Osmund Overby, supervising architect, May 1962.

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CONTINUATION SHEET Lippitt House      ITEM NUMBER 8      PAGE 2

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gilding, etc.--all either in perfect state or else undergoing careful restoration. Furniture and ornaments are all in period and most are part of the original furnishings. The owners intend this house to be a house museum, and there is probably no other house of this period in Rhode Island of its size, quality and state of preservation.

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Ocean Drive--Newport Historic District 7 PAGE 4  
CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER

28. House, c. 1940-1950. "Colonial" ranch-house style; one storey, cross-gabled roof, shingle wall cover, regularly-spaced windows, entrance on south side between bay-windows.
29. Stables of The Reef, c. 1880-1890. Queen Anne-Tudor style; one-and-one half storeys, stone wall cover, hipped roof with dormers, ruinous.

East side.

- 30- Houses, c. 1955-1970. "Colonial" and ranch-house styles; one-and-one-  
35, half, one and two storeys, wood wall cover.  
39.

West side.

- 36- Similar to numbers 30-35, 39 above.  
38.

Price's Neck Avenue.

East side.

22. Sea Cove, c. 1935-1945. Cape Cod Colonial style; one-and-one half storeys, many-gabled roof with dormers, shingle wall cover, numerous windows.
23. Sea Edge. Similar to number 22 above.
24. Little Edge. Similar to numbers 22-23 above.
25. Waterlot. Similar to numbers 22-24 above.

Ridge Road.

West side.

40. U. S. Coast Guard Station, 1940. Late Colonial or Federal Revival style; two-and-one-half storeys, hipped roof with dormers and cupola, regularly-spaced windows, entrance in one-storey columned portico on east side.