

William Binney House
72 Prospect Street
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-224

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
124-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. RI-224

WILLIAM BINNEY HOUSE

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RI,
4-PROV,
124-

Address: 72 Prospect Street, Providence, Providence County,
Rhode Island. Plat 10, Lot 242.

Present Owner: Abbe Loveland Tuller School of Providence, Inc.
and Occupant:

Present Use: School.

Brief Statement of Significance: This large brick house is a typical example of the architecture of the mid-19th Century in Providence. It was built for a prominent Providence lawyer and banker.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

1825 Thomas M Burgess, administrator of the Estate of George W Page sells to Nibholas Brown and Thomas P Ives..."the third of the estate on the Hill E/ly from the African Meeting House and on the N/ly side of Meeting Street on which it measures 50' and extends N/ly 130'; W/ly by Abner Daggett. The fourth estate is near the summit of the Hill at the junction of Prospect and Meeting Streets..Bound: S by Meeting Street 100'; E by Prospect 130'; N by Daniel Cushing; W by Nicholas Brown..with a DWELLING HOUSE and Barn. - Deed Book 48, page 276 in Providence City Hall. N by Daniel Cushing, E by N Brown.

1858 INDENTURE OF PARTITION... To Charlotte R Goddard party of the 1st part...ALSO the Page Estate so-called at the corner of Prospect and Meeting Streets...ALSO a lot a little W/ly of the above lot. - Deed Book 152, page 48, in Providence City Hall.

1858 Charlotte R Goodard, gentlewoman quit claims to William Binney two several tracts of land bounded: The First: E by Prospect Street 130'; S by Meeting Street 100'; W by Anne B F Woods; N formerly Daniel Cushing..The second lot: Westerly of the first lot bound: S by Meeting Street 50'; W formerly Abner Daggett 130'; N by Henry B Mumford; E formerly Nicholas Brown. - Deed Book 150, page 432, in Providence City Hall.

1860 William Binney listed here for the first time. - Providence Directory.

The whole of said two lots designated as the fourth and third in an estate which Thomas M Burgess Administrator of Estate of George W Page by his deed of 1825 conveyed to Nicholas Brown (Deed

Book 48, page 276, in Providence City Hall) and Thomas P Ives with all privileges appertaining thereunto.

This property was taxed to the following persons in the years designated:

1854	Thomas P Ives heirs
1858	Charlotte R Goddard
1858	William Binney
1915	William Binney Estate
1920	Thomas H West jr
1921	Walter Hidden
1930	Kate Hidden wid Walter for Life
1944	Anthony C Paolino
1946	Abbie Loveland Tuller
1947	Abbie Loveland Tuller School of Providence, Inc.

2. Date of erection: 1859

3. Architect: Alpheus C. Morse

4. Notes on alterations and additions: Rear wings have been added.

5. Sources of information: John Hutchins Cady, The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence 1636-1950 (Providence, Rhode Island: The Book Shop, 1957), p. 140.

Anita F. Glass, Early Victorian Domestic Architecture on College Hill (unpublished Master's Thesis, Department of Art, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island, 1960), p. 60.

B. Supplemental Material: The following information on William Binney, the original owner, was assembled by Margaret Fletcher for the Providence Preservation Society, April 1962:

"William Binney was born in Philadelphia, April 14th, 1825, son of the Hon. Horace and Elizabeth (Cox) Binney. He married first on June 14, 1848 Charlotte Hope daughter of William and Charlotte Rhode (Ives) Goddard of Providence Rhode Island. She died April 26, 1866. His second wife was Josephine Angier of Milton, Mass. daughter of the Rev. Joseph and Elizabeth (Rotch) Angier. They were married April 19, 1871.

"He attended Yale College and was a distinguished attorney and counsellor at law, with an office at 26 Washington Square, Philadelphia until 1853 when he moved to Providence, where he resided until 1883-4, when he moved to Newport, Rhode Island. There he lived at the corner of Catherine Street and DeBlois Avenue. He practiced law in Providence until 1867, when he organized and became President of the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Co. of Providence.

"A member of the Rhode Island Assembly and the Providence City Council continuously June 1857 to 1874. President of the Common Council, June 1863 to June 1871. He resigned from office January 26, 1874. During this time he drew up a city charter for Providence--delivered the oration on the death of Abraham Lincoln. [Taken from Charles J. L. Binney, Genealogy of the Binney Family in the United States (Albany, New York: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1886). Found at the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, Rhode Island.]

"William Binney organized the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Co., which was the first trust company in New England of its type. It consisted of a bank, a savings institution, and an incorporated executor, administrator and trustee of the estates of descendants and of the living who might desire to avail themselves of its services.

"He died April 2, 1909. [Taken from Rhode Island Historical Society Scrapbook #17 page 73. At the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, Rhode Island]."

Anita F. Glass, Early Victorian Domestic Architecture on College Hill, p. 60; provides the following information:

"According to the available historical data, in 1859 [Alpheus C. Morse] designed a brick house for William Binney at the corner of Prospect and Meeting Streets. As in the Hoppin mansion, the main facade of the Binney House is the most successful. In the mode of the Renaissance palace, it has the typical symmetrical elevation, molded string course, low hip roof and correct classic details on the windows and entrance portico. Although lacking in originality, the simplicity and sheer size of the Binney house express dignity and power. Even though covered with ivy, it seems to resent nature's intrusion and stands apart from its surroundings. A side view of the Binney house reveals the same clumsy massing that we saw in the Hoppin mansion. Morse didn't seem to understand the picturesque vocabulary. The wings bear no relation to each other, and like strangers, stand stiffly side by side. Some of the cills are later additions, but the original bay windows and conservatory seem to be an after thought, rather than a natural outward growth of the expression of the house."

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a large brick house, typical of the mid-19th century architecture in Providence, an example of the work of the architect Alpheus C. Morse.

2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: Main block, about 60' (three-bay east front) x 42', L-shape with short wing on south, three stories, two-story wing on north side, various wings added on west rear.
2. Foundations: Brownstone.
3. Wall construction: Smooth faced red brick, very narrow mortar joints, mortar colored black. Double brownstone belt courses between first and second floors.
4. Porches: Shallow enclosed entrance porch, brownstone, arched openings, engaged Roman Doric columns at the corners, balustrade on roof.
5. Chimneys: Two inside brick chimneys in main block.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doors: Main entrance door probably later; paneled, lighted wood door.
 - b. Windows: Six over six light double hung windows, brownstone window frames, sills on brackets, cornices on first and second floor windows, pediment on window over entrance porch, third floor windows are square with casement sash.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape: low hip roof with low monitor
 - b. Cornice: Large cornice, cyma recta crown mold, modillions, paneled cornice soffit, denticulated bed mold.

D. Site

1. General setting and orientation: House faces east on medium large level lot, at northwest corner of Prospect and Meeting Streets. House set back from sidewalk on east and south.
2. Enclosures: Lot raised slightly above sidewalk line with brownstone retaining wall.
3. Walks: Brick sidewalks, brownstone walk and steps leading to entrance porch.
4. Landscaping: Informal with lawn shrubs and trees; heavy growth of ivy on house.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
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