**Form O-300**

**July 1969**

**COMMON NAME:**
Hoppin (Thomas F.) House

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**STATE:**
Rhode Island

**COUNTY:**
Providence

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENTRY NUMBER</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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**STREET AND NUMBER:**
383 Benefit Street

**CITY OR TOWN:**
Providence

**STATE CODE:**
Rhode Island, 02903

**CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
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<td>Occupied</td>
<td>Yes:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Site</td>
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<td>In Process</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Private:</td>
<td>Being Considered</td>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Object</td>
<td>Both:</td>
<td>Preservation work in progress</td>
<td>Unoccupied</td>
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</table>

**PRESENT USE**

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Entertainment
- Government
- Industrial
- Private Residence
- Military
- Religious
- Private Residence
- Other (Specify)
- Transportation
- Museum
- Other (Specify)
- Transportation
- Scientific
- Other (Specify)

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

**OWNER'S NAME:**
William C. Fisher Company

**STREET AND NUMBER:**
383 Benefit Street

**CITY OR TOWN:**
Providence

**STATE CODE:**
Rhode Island, 02903

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

**COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:**
City Hall

**STREET AND NUMBER:**
Dorrance Street at Washington Street

**CITY OR TOWN:**
Providence

**STATE CODE:**
Rhode Island, 02903

**REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

**TITLE OF SURVEY:**
Historic American Buildings Survey

**DATE OF SURVEY:**
1956, 1961

**DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:**
Library of Congress

**STREET AND NUMBER:**
Independence Avenue and 1st Street, S. E.

**CITY OR TOWN:**
Washington

**STATE CODE:**
District of Columbia
retaining wall that runs along the west and south sides of the lot was once crested by sanded and painted cast-iron balusters and a brownstone rail. An iron gate remains at the sidewalk entrance on Benefit Street, but the larger one in the John Street driveway piers has been lost. The grounds are informally planted with shrubs, and today unkempt.

The Hoppin house is laid out about a central hallway running north-south; the south end is a large vestibule for the main entrance. The half of the house west of the hall is divided into three large (drawing- and dining-) rooms; the east half into a large room at the (south) front, a stair hall and east entrance hall at the center, and a smaller room and corridor leading to the kitchen at the rear (north). A door from the small room gives access to a service stair. (The second floor of the house has eight rooms in an arrangement like that of the first floor, around a long central hall; and the third floor is similarly laid out. Many rooms on the second and third floors have now been subdivided for office use.) The stair hall on the first floor is separated from the central hallway by an open triple arcade corresponding to the east and west exterior arcades treatment; this decorative feature is repeated by blind arcing on the west wall of the hall. The stairway is U-shaped around an open well, with two landings between floors; it has a closed panelled string, panelled soffits, heavy angular newels between which turned balusters support a molded, ramped handrail; the whole is stained a dark oak color. The floor of the vestibule is covered with black and white marble tile; the wide pine boards flooring the first and second stories were intended always to be covered by carpeting; and the third story now is floored with asphalt tile.

Walls on the first floor display elaborate plaster and wooden paneling. The two front rooms at the southeast and southwest corners have oak-panelled wainscoting, plaster ceilings laid off in panels, and (in the southeast room) an entablature with a Doric frieze. The ceiling in the southwest room is grained to look like wood. The plaster ceiling in the vestibule has one large recessed panel, heavily molded, with quadrants taken out of the corners. The two other principal rooms on the first floor have plaster walls and ceilings with elaborate trim, and the ceiling above the stairwell has a deeply-recessed oval panel. Doors on the first floor—some of which are sliding—have heavily-molded surrounds and panels (some later glass doors have been installed in the hall). The upper floors have plaster walls with molded, mitered architraves on doors (many of which have been removed) and windows, and generally simpler trim. Windows are recessed in the thick walls and have panelled reveals, folding shutters. Corner rooms on all floors have fireplaces, many with heavy, decorated iron hearth surrounds or with marble mantels typical of the 1850's. The mantelpiece in the southwest room of the first floor, however,

(See Continuation Sheet 2.)
7. Description.

is of deeply-carved oak, with twisted columns and a great lion mask; it has a pink marble facing and a black marble hearth. The west middle room on the first floor is notable for its decoration. The walls have panels of raised plaster molding with rococo leaf detail at the tops and bottoms above a chair-rail and paneled wainscoting, and there are carvings over the doors. The ceiling has a center medallion from which a crystal chandelier is hung, and it is bordered by a molded plaster cornice with egg-and-dart and guilloche ornament. The mirror over the richly-carved white marble fireplace is part of the original scheme of decoration.

8. Significance.

only cultivated but also an heiress; together they made their large residence a center of artistic and social life in the city; due to their lavish style of entertaining it became known as "the house of a thousand candles." After Mr. Hoppin's death in 1873, his widow remarried, and the house was sometimes let, among its occupants being Governor George P. Wetmore, who in winters in the state capital needed magnificence equal to what he had during summers at Château-sur-Mer in Newport. In 1877, the house was taken over by the then Governor, Ambrose Burnside, on the occasion of a visit by President Rutherford B. Hayes, who was given a great fête at the Hoppin house, with ornamental illuminations outdoors.

In 1920 the house passed from ownership of the Hoppin heirs. Today the building houses two businesses whose needs have considerably altered the interior. The exterior is being allowed to deteriorate badly although it retains, as of now, most of its visual integrity. The grounds are poorly kept, and the retaining wall has lost all of its balustrade.

The Hoppin house is one of the great mansions on Benefit Street, an important part of the fabric of the Historic District in which it stands, and by itself deserves also this separate nomination to the National Register.
The Thomas F. Hoppin house is one of the largest and most elegant houses built in Providence during the mid-nineteenth century and is a handsome example of the interest during this period in formal English urban architecture, particularly that of Sir Charles Barry. The house is similar to contemporary London mansions in St. James’s and in Kensington Palace Gardens, whose style is also reflected in Thomas A. Tefft's Tully B. Bowen house, just to the south, of a year or two earlier. Being in such close proximity, the two houses form an instructive pair; having a long, impressive façade on Benefit Street, the Hoppin house proclaims itself more grandly than does the Bowen house (a discreet Florentine palazzo). The Hoppin house, built about 1853, is also significant because it preceded Henry Childs's Henry Lippitt house (1863) on Hope Street, and Richard Upjohn's Marshall Woods house (1863) on Prospect Street—both of which represent a move away from the academically Italianate forms seen in the Hoppin house to a more stylized, Victorian mode during the 1860's. The interior of the Hoppin house displays an eclectic use of materials and decoration. The still-regular formal plan and massive staircase, the plaster moldings and marble fireplaces are among its most notable features.

Alpheus C. Morse (1818-1893), was the architect of this imposing dwelling, his first commission in Providence. Born in Massachusetts, he apprenticed as a draftsman in the Boston office of Alexander Parris in the 1830's, and by 1842 was travelling in Europe, no doubt with an influence upon his future architecture; the buildings by Thomas Tefft which he could see in Providence and other places upon his return must surely have been another influence. After executing the Hoppin house, Morse remained the rest of his life in Providence, where he enjoyed a prosperous practice, designing numerous prominent buildings and important residences. He became the first president of the Rhode Island chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

On the site of the Hoppin house had first stood John Innes Clark's "mansion house," a close duplicate of the Joseph Nightingale house still nearby on Benefit Street. A fire razed the Clark house in 1839 during the occupancy of William Jenkins, whose daughter Anna subsequently married Thomas F. Hoppin and commenced by 1853 the present building. Thomas Hoppin was very cultivated and Anna Hoppin was not

(See Continuation Sheet 2.)
Hitchcock, Henry-Russell, Jr.: Rhode Island Architecture (Providence, Rhode Island, 1918), pp. 50.
The Merchants National Bank, Providence, Providence, Rhode Island: Providence (Providence, Rhode Island, 1918), pp. 60-62.

**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

**Latitude and Longitude Coordinates**

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<th>LONGITUDE</th>
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<tr>
<td>SW</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
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**Defining a Rectangle Locating the Property**

**Defining the Center Point of a Property**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
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**Approximate Acreage of Nominated Property:** Less than one acre

**List All States and Counties for Properties Overlapping State or County Boundaries**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>CODE</th>
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<td>CODE</td>
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</table>

**FORM PREPARED BY**

**NAME AND TITLE:** B. Christopher Bene, Surveyor-Researcher

**ORGANIZATION:** Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

**STREET AND NUMBER:** Room 201, 265 Melrose Street

**CITY OR TOWN:** Providence

**STATE/LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

- National [ ]
- State [ ]
- Local [ ]

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

**Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation**

**ATTEST:**

**Keeper of The National Register**

**DATE:** Feb. 12, 1972
<table>
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<th>1. NAME</th>
<th>COMMON: Hoppin (Thomas F.) House</th>
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<td>AND/OR HISTORIC:</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. LOCATION</td>
<td>STREET AND NUMBER: 383 Benefit Street</td>
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<td></td>
<td>CITY OR TOWN: Providence</td>
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<td>3. PHOTO REFERENCE</td>
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<td>DATE OF PHOTO: February, 1972</td>
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<td>NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Room 201, 265 Melrose Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02907</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. IDENTIFICATION</td>
<td>DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Partial view of drawing-room.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

1. NAME
COMMON: Hoppin (Thomas F.) House
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER: 383 Benefit Street
CITY OR TOWN: Providence
STATE: Rhode Island
COUNTY: Providence

3. PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher Bene
DATE OF PHOTO: February, 1972
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Room 201, 265 Melrose Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02907

4. IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
Mantel in room on first floor.
**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

*(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>Rhode Island</th>
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<tr>
<td>COUNTY</td>
<td>Providence</td>
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**ENTRY NUMBER**

**DATE**

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1. **NAME**
   - **COMMON**: Howdin (Thomas F.) House
   - **AND/OR HISTORIC**: T. W. Howdin House

2. **LOCATION**
   - **STREET AND NUMBER**: 383 Benefit Street
   - **CITY OR TOWN**: Providence
   - **STATE**: Rhode Island

3. **PHOTO REFERENCE**
   - **PHOTO CREDIT**: B. Christopher Bene
   - **DATE OF PHOTO**: February, 1972
   - **NEGATIVE FILED AT**: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Room 201, 265 Melrose Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02907

4. **IDENTIFICATION**
   - **DESCRIPTIVE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.**
     - West elevation.
1. NAME

COMMON: Hoppin (Thomas F.) House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
383 Benefit Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Providence

STATE:
Rhode Island

COUNTY:
Providence

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

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DATE OF PHOTO: February, 1972

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Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Room 201, 265 Melrose Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02907

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Exterior from the south-east, showing (left) entrance porch, (centre) arcade entrance from driveway with niche and statue above, (right centre) service wing connected by arcade to stable facilities (far right).
STATE: Rhode Island
COUNTY: Providence

PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

TYPE ALL ENTRIES - ATTACH TO OR ENCLOSE WITH PHOTOGRAPH

1. NAME
COMMON: Hoppin (Thomas F.) House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION
STREET AND NUMBER: 383 Benefit Street
CITY OR TOWN: Providence
STATE: Rhode Island

CODE COUNTY: Providence

3. PHOTO REFERENCE
PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher Bene
DATE OF PHOTO: February, 1972
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Room 201, 265 Melrose Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02907

4. IDENTIFICATION
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
Main staircase, seen at its first-floor beginning.
**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**  

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**  

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

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Providence

**STATE:**  
Rhode Island

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Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Room 201,  
265 Melrose Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02907

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**IDENTIFICATION**

**DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.:**  
Detail of first-floor hall and main stairway, looking north-east.
<table>
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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**

*(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)*

**1. NAME**

COMMON: Hoppin (Thomas F.) House

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: 383 Benefit Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence

STATE: Rhode Island

**3. PHOTO REFERENCE**

PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher Bene

DATE OF PHOTO: February, 1972

NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Room 201, 265 Melrose Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02907

**4. IDENTIFICATION**

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Detail of second-floor bed-chamber.
GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES

Latitude: 41° 49' 16.60" N
Longitude: 71° 24' 10.53" W
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(TYPE ALL ENTRIES - ATTACH TO OR ENCLOSE WITH MAP)

1. NAME

COMMON: Hoppin (Thomas F.) House
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
383 Benefit Street
CITY OR TOWN:
Providence

STATE:
Rhode Island

CODE: 441
COUNTY:
Providence

CODE: 007

3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE: U. S. Geological Survey

SCALE: 1: 24,000
DATE: 1957

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.