1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **Fleur-de-Lys Studios**
Other Name/Site Number: **Sydney Burleigh Studio**

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: **7 Thomas Street**
City/Town: **Providence**
State: **RI**
County: **Providence**
Vicinity: **N/A**

3. CLASSIFICATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ownership of Property</th>
<th>Category of Property</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private: <em>X</em></td>
<td>Building(s): <em>X</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public-local: ___</td>
<td>District: ___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public-State: ___</td>
<td>Site: ___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public-Federal: ___</td>
<td>Structure: ___</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Object: ___</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Resources within Property

- Contributing: 1
- Noncontributing: 0 buildings, 0 sites, 0 structures, 0 objects

Total: 1

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 1

Name of related multiple property listing: **N/A**
4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official ___________________________ Date ________________

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official ___________________________ Date ________________

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

___ Entered in the National Register ____________________________

___ Determined eligible for the ________________________________
National Register

___ Determined not eligible for the ________________________________
National Register

___ Removed from the National Register ____________________________

___ Other (explain): ____________________________________________

Signature of Keeper ___________________________ Date of Action ________________
PROPERTY NAME: Fleur-de-Lys Studios

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: OTHER
Sub: artists' studios

Current: OTHER
Sub: artists' studios

7. DESCRIPTION

Architectural Classification: Tudor Revival

Materials:
Foundation: BRICK
Walls: WOOD/shingle
Roof: ASPHALT
Other Description: STUCCO/facade panels
Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Standing near the foot of College Hill on the north side of densely-built, one-block-long Thomas Street, the Fleur-de-Lys Studios is a two-and-a-half story, wood-frame building with a prominent half-timbered facade elaborately embellished with decorative stucco. The simply finished interior has large, north-lighted studios at the rear (north) of the building and smaller studios on the south side. Save for creation of additional studio space within the attic story, the building appears now as it did in the plans drawn in 1885, when it was built, and the photographs taken of the building upon its occupation on 1 January 1886.

The building's setting is important and largely unaltered from the time of its completion. Late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century dwellings line the north side of Thomas Street, a one-block link between Benefit and North Main Streets. Buildings on Thomas Street are tightly serried when not abutting; their side and rear elevations are at best little visible. The 1774 First Baptist Meeting House (NHL) occupies the full block on the street's south side. Across Waterman Street, on the south side of the First Baptist Meeting House, is the original building of Rhode Island School of Design.

The Fleur-de-Lys's emblematic facade is the focus of exterior architectural articulation of the end-gable-roof, rectangular-plan building approximately thirty feet wide, forty feet deep, and forty-three-feet high at the crest of the roof. The half-timbered facade is broadly divided into two bays, defined by semi-octagonal oriels on the first and second stories and prismatic oriels in the projecting attic story; it resembles "two loosely angled folding-screens placed one above the other in front of the basically rectangular building." The entrance is set within the left (west) bay. All windows are leaded multiple-pane casement windows.

The plastered panels of the historiated facade are highly decorated with low-relief Proto-Art Nouveau sculpture, some painted, some left natural. Panels within the porch are inscribed with "BURLEIGH" in a cartouche and "THE FLEUR-DE-LYS STUDIOS" on ribbons. Above the entrance, three quatrefoil panels bear the inscriptions from left to right, "B," a stylized fleur-de-lys, and "1885." A large rectangular panel on the right (east) side of the bay window bears a bunch of stylized iris set within a round arch carried on crocketed pilasters and the legend "THOU ART THE IRIS FAIR AMONG THE FAIREST" on a ribbon woven through the flowers. In the attic story, three large panels bear allegorical figures representing the visual arts: Sculpture on the left, Painting at center, and Architecture on the right.

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Framing these panels are portraits of Burleigh on the left, full-face and wearing a tam-o'-shanter, and Mrs. Burleigh on the right, in profile and wearing a conical hat and ruff. Other panels are filled with sinuous garlands, birds, and animals.

The interior is divided vertically into a full first story, a mezzanine on the south side of the building, and a full second story. The entrance opens into a small vestibule and stairs to the upper stories. The enclosed staircase runs straight up from the vestibule and ends with winders at the top. At right is the entrance to the first-story studio, with a reception room and classroom on the south side and a large studio across the north side. The studio has a staircase at its southwest corner to the mezzanine-level gallery and a large fireplace centered on the west wall. Staircase and gallery balusters are flat with curved sawn designs. The brick fireplace is decorated with old tiles from an inn in Dordrecht, Holland, set within red plaster "modeled to represent some basket-woven reed dykes in Dordrecht." At the mezzanine level, the gallery opens onto the stairhall, and a small studio is located over the building's entrance. On the second story are smaller studios located over the mezzanine studio and the first-story classroom and a large studio with fireplace on the north side above the first-story studio.

Interior detail is quite simple. As Kaufmann notes:

The stair hall, with a solid board parapet and pinnacled upright posts, is clearly derived from Webb's house for William Morris. Some plaster panels are countersunk with ready-made stamps and other motifs.3

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3Kaufmann, p. 290.
Fleur-de-Lys Studios, 7 Thomas Street, Providence, Rhode Island
Site plan—Sketch Map, not to scale

Plan of land in Providence, R.I.
belonging to the

ESTATE OF SYDNEY BURLEIGH
By Waterman Engineering Co. April, 1939
Scale: 10 feet to an inch.

Area = 2375 sq ft

George A. Crutchbank

N.Y., N.H. & Hartford R.R. Co.
Concrete Retaining Wall

31.24

75.55

6.007 ft

N.Y., N.H. & Hartford R.R. Co. to
Sydney Burleigh
Prov. Records 08.300 p. 37
July 2, 1908.

THOMAS ST.
Fleur-de-Lys Studios, 7 Thomas Street, Providence, Rhode Island
Facade elevation and section through front wall, drawing by Stone & Carpenter, 1885--Reduced from original, not to scale
Fleur-de-Lys Studios, 7 Thomas Street, Providence, Rhode Island
Traverse and longitudinal sections, drawing by Stone & Carpenter, 1885—Reduced from original not to scale
Fleur-de-Lys Studios, 7 Thomas Street, Providence, Rhode Island

Plans, drawing by Stone & Carpenter, 1885—Reduced from original, not to scale
8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally:__ Statewide:__ Locally:__

Applicable National Register Criteria: A___ B___ C X D___

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A___ B___ C___ D___ E___ F___ G___

NHL Criteria: 1, 4

NHL Theme(s): XVI. Architecture M. Period Revivals 3. Craftsman XXIV. Painting and Sculpture E. European Influences

Areas of Significance: Period(s) of Significance Significant Dates

Architecture 1885-1931 1885-86
Painting and Sculpture 1885-1931 1885-86

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: Edmund Russell Willson, partner in Stone, Carpenter & Willson, in collaboration with Sydney Richmond Burleigh and the Art Workers Guild


State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

The Fleur-de-Lys Studios is a key architectural monument to the American Arts and Crafts Movement. It is significant in the history of the movement itself and in the history of American architecture.

The Arts and Crafts Movement was well established in England by the early 1880s. The multifaceted movement, generally understood as a reaction to nineteenth-century industrialization, emphasized the process of producing works of art by hand. It advocated unifying the arts and making art a part of everyday life. The Fleur-de-Lys embodies the very characteristics of the movement, which emerged full blown in this country only in the later 1880s and 1890s.

The building's design is the product of a collaboration by painter Sydney R. Burleigh and architect Edmund R. Willson, a principal in the Providence firm of Stone, Carpenter & Willson. Both men achieved considerable professional prominence during their lifetimes. Burleigh studied painting between 1876 and 1880 in Paris under Jean Paul Laurens, the teacher of many prominent American pupils. He quickly became the leader of the art community in Rhode Island: he served on the Board of Directors of the Rhode Island School of Design from 1887 to 1893 and on its Board of Trustees from 1919 until his death in 1931. Burleigh was also active in national art circles and, like many notable late nineteenth-century artists, exhibited regularly at the National Academy of Design in New York, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia, and Rhode Island School of Design. Willson, like his mentor Charles Follen McKim, had attended Harvard College and the Ecole des Beaux-arts. Willson's work received high critical acclaim in prestigious professional journals, especially American Architect and Building News, and, more recently, increasing attention by scholars of

"Kaufmann op. cit., p. 285, refers to the building as "apparently unique example ... here submitted to wider scrutiny."

"For a full discussion of origins of the movement, see Wendy Kaplan, "The Lamp of British Precedent: An Introduction to the Arts and Crafts Movement," "The Art that is Life": The Arts and Crafts Movement in America, 1875-1920, Boston, 1987, pp. 52-60.

"For discussion of the influence of the Ecole des Beaux-arts on the Arts and Crafts Movement, see Richard Guy Wilson, "American Arts and Crafts Architecture: Radical though Dedicated to the Cause Conservative,"The Art that is Life", p. 107.

Willson's extensive obituary was published in American Architect and Building News 91 (9 February 1907): 67-72.
American architectural history.  

Both Burleigh and Willson were involved in the building's design. According to Mrs. Burleigh, the studio was "built after the style of old half-timbered buildings in Chester, England, where Mr. Burleigh had been recently staying...." Willson, too, knew Chester from trips there between 1879 and 1881 while he was a student at the Ecole des Beaux-arts, and his sketchbooks record Chester's picturesque medieval buildings:

Construction was executed by local builders and Burleigh's Art Workers Guild. This was the first of several collaborations of the Art Workers Guild. Established in 1885 by Burleigh, John G. Aldrich and Charles Walter Stetson, the Art Workers Guild was named after the similar-spirited organization founded in London in 1884. The Art Workers Guild reflects the rise of interest in decorative arts that occurred around 1880; other groups include the New York Society of Decorative Arts (1877), Louis Comfort Tiffany's Company of Associated Artists (1879), and the Rookwood Pottery (1880) in Cincinnati. The group remained active in Rhode Island until the end of the 1880s, and "historians have credited the Providence group as among the movement's pioneers in the establishment of the English guild concept in America." Other extant commissions by the Art Workers Guild include interiors for the Lyman Klapp House (1886-1888), 217 Hope Street, Providence, and the Adelina T. Scriver House (1886-1887), 581 West Main Road, Little Compton, Rhode Island; both houses were also designed by Edmund R. Willson. Commissions for the Dr. Clarence Gardiner House (ca 1887), also Willson, and the Providence Masonic Temple (1884-1886), Frederick E. Field, architect, have been lost to hurricane and fire.

The building's unification of the three visual arts is emphasized by the three allegorical figures in the pediment. They make explicit the importance of the philosophical integration of

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9Miner, p. 156.

10Aldrich (1864-1952) had just graduated from Worcester Polytechnic Institute when he became involved with the Art Workers Guild. Stetson (1858-1911) was an oil painter with an international reputation during his lifetime. For a fuller evaluation of Stetson's career, see Charles C. Eldredge, Charles Walter Stetson: Color and Fantasy (Lawrence, Kansas, 1982) and Mary Hill, ed. Endure: the Diaries of Charles Walter Stetson (Philadelphia, 1985).

11Eldredge p. 42.
the three arts realized here. Moreover, the involvement of the Art Workers Guild in the plastering and creation of interior decoration united the fine and practical arts. As Kaufmann notes, "the unity of the arts is incorporated here in an example probably unparalleled in American architecture for the fusion of the useful and ornamental arts."12

The studio not only embodied the fine and practical arts, but also made them public, a part of daily life.

The whole city was interested and many were stirred, beholding a symbol of something vaguely important. The carved beams and plaster reliefs of this quaint building were fascinating indeed, but beyond that the very fact that anyone should build a studio building for painters was startling. The new structure was more than an ordinary business venture, it was a public monument—a symbol of the progress the community had made in its flowering art culture, and a declaration of faith by the painters, faith in the importance of their painting and of their place in the life of the city.13

Providence was the ideal breeding ground for the first flowering of the Arts & Crafts movement. By the early 1880s, it had the critical combination of heavy industrialization, civic and cultural ambition, and a rapidly developing artistic community.

The American Industrial Revolution, begun in adjacent Pawtucket at Slater Mill (NHL) in 1790, was first financed by Providence capital. Providence developed in the nineteenth century as the industrial center of a rapidly increasing industrial hinterland. The city itself was home to internationally important plants—including Brown & Sharpe, Nicholson File, and Corliss Steam Engine Works—while its radiating river valleys were lined with the textile mill villages owned and operated by B. B. & R. Knight, Brown & Ives, and the Metcalf family, founders of Rhode Island School of Design.

Providence saw considerable institutional development during the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s. Signaling the city's emergence as a metropolis were new streetcar lines (1864 et seq.), public water supply (1870 et seq.), extensive public-school-building programs in the 1870s and 1880s, a new City Hall (1874-1878), and the establishment of major institutions, including Rhode Island Hospital (1863), Roger Williams Park (1871), Providence Opera House (1871), Providence Public Library (1874), Rhode Island School of Design (1877), and the Providence Art Club (1880). The city was growing not only in size (from 50,666 in 1860 to 118,070 in 1885) but also in complexity and sophistication. The critical

12Kaufmann, p. 291.

13Miner, p. 154.
mass of a large population virtually required institutional
growth, but in Providence it acquired a more artistic cast than
in other similar sized cities.

As early as the 1850s, the Rhode Island Art Association had
lobbied, albeit unsuccessfully, for an art gallery and school of
design, and the Group of 1855 represented an informal attempt by
local artists to associate themselves in loose organization. The
founding of the Rhode Island School of Design in 1877 and the
Providence Art Club in 1880, however, realized a permanent
artistic presence in the city. Importantly, the creators and
inhabiters of the Fleur-de-Lys were intimately associated with
both organizations.14

Burleigh, Stetson, Aldrich, and other occupants of the
Fleur-de-Lys reacted negatively to American technological
advancement and sought relief from the "hard edges of
industrialization and the visual pollution of an urbanizing city
space."15 Stetson referred to the building as a "...unique and
mysterious domain of art...a building misunderstood by the
people, disliked by the perfectly modern and neat, and beloved by
us who harbor there...."16 The Fleur-de-Lys was, on the one
hand, a retreat both philosophically and architecturally for its
artist occupants from the industrial city as well as, on the
other hand, a permanent cultural reminder in that industrial
city.

Upon completion, the building received national attention.
The interiors were published in Art and Decoration in May 1886,
and the exterior appeared in American Architect and Building News
on 10 May 1890. In 1896,

One writer described it as "a unique cozy-looking
structure which time will mellow and fashion dignify."
He determined that "Providence is just the picturesque
city for such a building, and its citizens are
doubtless pleased with the artistic sentiments of its
two worthy artists," Stetson and Burleigh.17

"Charles Walter Stetson and George W. Whitaker were founding
members of the Art Club and original inhabitants of the Fleur-de-
Lys. Burleigh, abroad at the time of the club's founding, joined
it immediately upon his return. His association with Rhode Island
School of Design is noted above.

"Mary Hill, ed., The Diaries of Charles Walter Stetson

"Charles Walter Stetson, "The Studio," unidentified clipping

"Eldredge, p. 37.
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Art and Decoration (May 1886), (May, 1896)

American Architect and Building News 750 (10 May 1890).


Miner, George L. Angell's Lane. Providence, 1948.


Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
X Previously Listed in the National Register.
___ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
___ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
___ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey:
___ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record:

Primary Location of Additional Data:

X State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State Agency
___ Federal Agency
___ Local Government
___ University
___ Other: Specify Repository: R.I. Historical Preservation Commission
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: less than one acre, c. 2375 square feet

UTM References: Zone Northing Easting Zone Northing Easting

A 19 299920 4633240 B __ _______ ______
C __ _______ ______ D __ _______ ______
E __ _______ ______ F __ _______ ______

Verbal Boundary Description:

The property nominated coincides with Providence Tax Assessor's Plat 10: Lot 481.

Boundary Justification:

The property nominated coincides with the land historically associated with the property since the building's construction.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Wm McKenzie Woodward, Principal Historic Preservation

Org.: R.I. Historical Preservation Commission

Date: June, 1991

Street/#: 150 Benefit Street

City/Town: Providence

State: Rhode Island

ZIP: 02903

Edited by: M. Carolyn Pitts, National Park Service

Telephone: 202-343-8166

Date: April 9, 1992
Fleur-de-lis Studios
7 Thomas Street
19. 24920. 4633240