

# DOWNTOWN PROVIDENCE

This report is published by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission as part of the program set forth in Rhode Island's "Historical Preservation Plan," first edition (1970). It is jointly sponsored and funded as a planning tool by the Commission and the City of Providence. Commission activities are supported by state and local funds and by the Department of the Interior, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, under provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. City funding was provided through the Mayor's Office of Community Development.

The city and the state Historical Preservation Commission are jointly sponsoring a comprehensive historical survey of Providence. When complete, this planning study will include an overview report on the city as a whole and individual reports on historic neighborhoods.

The Rhode Island Historical Society has made an invaluable contribution to the preparation of this report through the assistance of its staff and library.

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Cover: Downtown Providence from the Southeast.

Title Page: Downtown Providence from Neutaconkanut Hill.

This document is a copy of the original survey published in 1981.  
It has not been corrected or updated.

Since the original publication:

- >additional properties have been entered on the National Register;
- >some financial incentives referred to in these pages are no longer available;
- >some new financial incentives are available.

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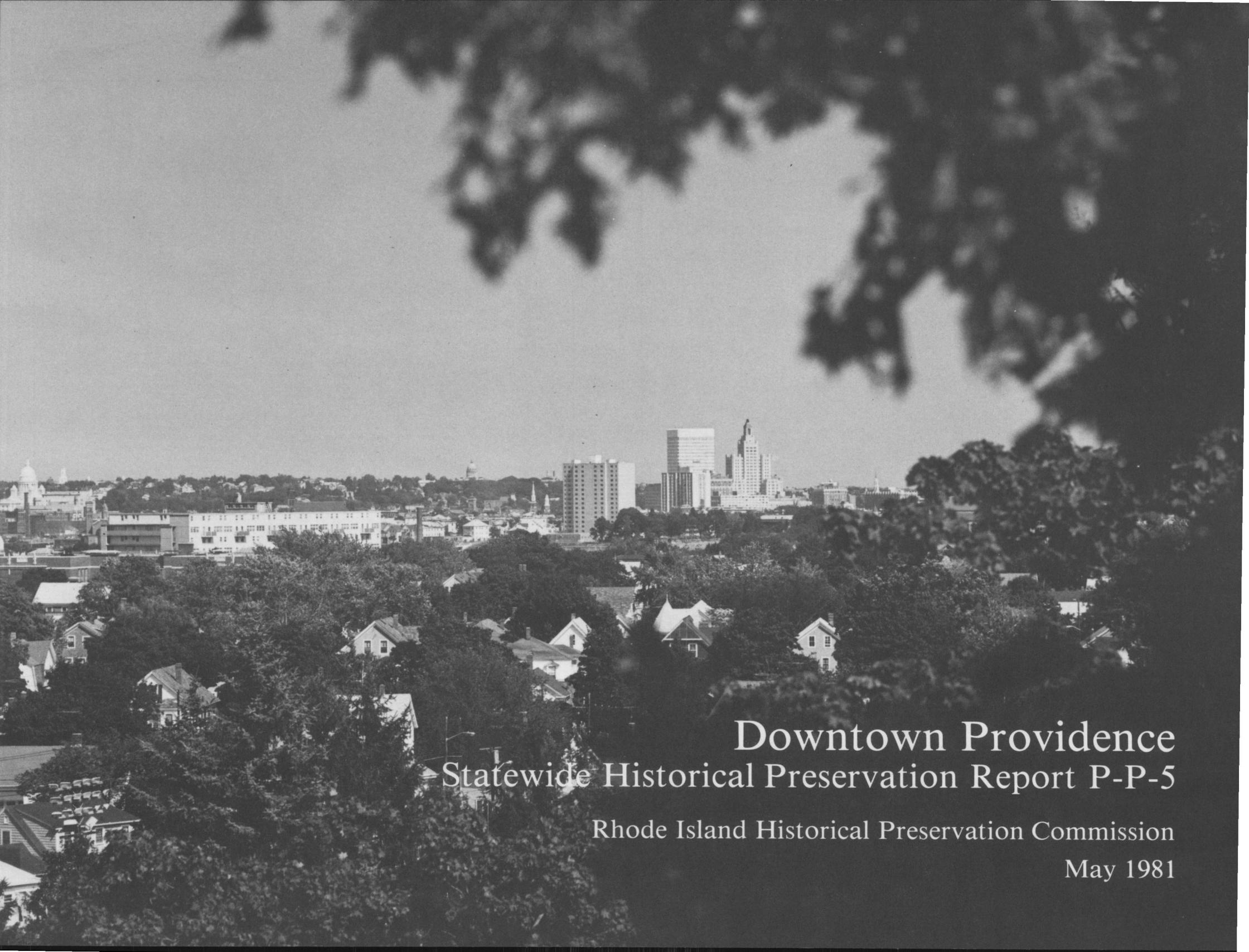
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The Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission is your state agency for historical preservation. The Commission identifies and protects historic buildings, districts, landscapes, structures, and archaeological sites throughout the State of Rhode Island.



Downtown Providence  
Statewide Historical Preservation Report P-P-5

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

May 1981



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
Old State House  
150 Benefit Street  
Providence, R. I. 02903  
(401) 277-2678

May 4, 1981

The Honorable J. Joseph Garrahy, Governor  
State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations  
State House  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Governor Garrahy:

It is with pleasure that I transmit herewith Downtown Providence--Statewide Historical Preservation Report P-P-5, the thirty-third publication in the Statewide Historical Preservation Report series.

This report provides an analysis of the historical and architectural growth of Downtown Providence and recommends a preservation program which should be incorporated into the city's overall planning effort.

With the publication of this report, the Commission is well on its way to fulfilling its responsibility to record the state's rich cultural resources. Six additional reports are now being prepared; their completion will contribute significantly toward the achievement of our goal of producing reports on all thirty-nine cities and towns in the state. Four reports have already been published concerning Providence neighborhoods: The West Side, South Providence, Elmwood, and Smith Hill. Study of Providence industrial sites is in final stages of preparation. In addition, a citywide overview report will be published.

The Commission believes that its effort, as represented by this and other reports, will further the cause of historical preservation in Rhode Island.

Very sincerely,

*Automette F. Downing*  
Mrs. George E. Downing  
Chairman



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
Old State House  
150 Benefit Street  
Providence, R. I. 02903  
(401) 277-2678

May 4, 1981

The Honorable Vincent A. Cianci, Jr., Mayor  
The City of Providence  
25 Dorrance Street  
Providence, Rhode Island 02903

Dear Mayor Cianci:

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission is pleased to submit in final published form this survey and report Downtown Providence--Statewide Preservation Report P-P-5. The product of detailed study by Wm McKenzie Woodward of the Commission staff, it is truly a joint effort on the part of the City of Providence and the State Commission. Not only has the local financial match been supplied by your office through the City's Community Development program, but our work has further benefitted from the generous efforts of many City officials and private citizens who have contributed time and shared information of great importance for this study.

Four reports have already been published concerning Providence neighborhoods: The West Side, South Providence, Elmwood, and Smith Hill. The Providence Industrial Sites report is nearing completion. Further, a citywide overview is in preparation and will be published.

We hope Downtown Providence will prove of lasting value to the neighborhood and to the city as a whole as an educational and planning tool, serving as a guide to the central business district's rich history and cultural heritage and providing a vehicle to further Downtown revitalization.

Very truly yours,

*Automette F. Downing*  
Mrs. George E. Downing  
Chairman

## PREFACE

The Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission was established in 1968 by an act of the General Assembly to develop a state preservation program under the aegis of the Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, United States Department of the Interior. Citizen members of the Commission are appointed by the Governor; serving as ex-officio members are the Director of the Department of Economic Development, the Director of the Department of Environmental Management, the Chief of the Division of Statewide Planning, the State Building Code Commissioner, and the Chairman of the House and Senate Finance Committees of the General Assembly. The Director of the Department of Community Affairs has been appointed by the Governor as the State Historic Preservation Officer for Rhode Island.

The Historical Preservation Commission is charged with the responsibilities of: conducting a statewide survey of historic sites and, from the survey, recommending places of local, state, or national significance for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places; administering federal grants-in-aid for acquisition or development of National Register properties; and developing a state historic preservation plan. Additional duties include: compiling and maintaining a State Register of Historic Places; assisting state and municipal agencies in the area of historic preservation by undertaking special project review studies; the certification of rehabilitation projects under the Tax Reform Act of 1976; the review of federal, state, and municipal projects which may affect cultural resources; and regulating archeological exploration on state lands and under waters of state jurisdiction.

The Rhode Island statewide historical survey, inaugurated in 1969, has been designed to locate, identify, map, and report on buildings, sites, areas, and objects of historical and architectural value. During the survey, consideration is given to the total environment of the area under study. In addition to outstanding structures and historical sites, buildings of all periods and styles, which constitute the fabric of a community, are recorded and evaluated.

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## INTRODUCTION

This historical survey of Downtown Providence was undertaken for the city by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission with funds provided by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior, the State of Rhode Island, and the Mayor's Office of Community Development. The long-range goal of the city and the Commission in helping to fund this survey has been to increase awareness of the importance and historic significance of the central business district, both for Downtown workers and property owners and for residents throughout the city served by this vital core. For this reason, the results of the survey are presented in this publication, which is distributed free of charge.

The Downtown survey must further be viewed in a city-wide context, as part of an ongoing program to document all of the city's historically important areas and scattered historic sites. Conducted over several years in cooperation with the Mayor's Office of Community Development, this program has expanded the coverage first provided by the landmark *College Hill* first published in 1959. The present coordinated effort includes the *West Side* (1976), *South Providence* (1978), *Elmwood* (1979), *Smith Hill* (1980), and *Industrial Sites* (1981) — published by the Historical Preservation Commission. The survey will eventually produce a publication giving a summary overview of the entire city.

The Historical Preservation Commission undertook preliminary identification of Downtown's cultural resources in 1977, and the present survey was inaugurated in 1979.

To accomplish the goals of the project, several steps were necessary, including a field survey, historical research, preparation of maps, and the final survey report. A standard survey form, the "Historic Building Data Sheet," has been prepared by the Historical Preservation Commission for use throughout the state. This sheet includes both historical and architectural information and a photograph of each building or site. Historical information was obtained through the use of maps, street atlases, published and unpublished histories, guidebooks, manuscripts, newspapers, directories, photographic collections, and public records. In some cases, deed and building-permit research provided dates, architects, and builders of structures. Data from the survey sheets was transferred to maps to make information pertaining to historic preservation readily available for planning purposes. The Downtown survey included the cataloging and analysis of every structure within the defined area. A detailed explanation of the methodology, together with a copy of the "Historic Building Data Sheet" and a sample detail from a survey map, appear in Appendix D.

Results of the survey and the report have been reviewed at preliminary stages by city officials, local historians, knowledgeable citizens, and the members and staff of the Historical Preservation Commission. Copies of the survey sheets and maps are available to neighborhood groups; city planners; and local, state, and federal officials and agencies. All results of the survey are available to the public.

This report attempts a schematic, contextual history of Downtown Providence, focusing on the area's

premier importance as an economic center both for the city and for the state as a whole, with emphasis on the events which effected this development. Following this analysis are recommendations for preservation planning and an inventory of structures, sites, and monuments Downtown; there are also appendices explaining the survey procedure and programs offered by the Historical Preservation Commission.

The objectives of this report are fourfold: to emphasize the concentration of high-quality buildings remarkable in this country for their ability, taken as a whole, to document the growth of a major urban center; to stimulate civic pride, making residents aware of their historical and visual environment and encouraging a more informed interest in their collective heritage; to serve as an educational and academic background tool for the study of local and state history; and to provide a planning tool for the dynamic growth that is crucial to any downtown.

The Historical Preservation Commission thanks the following organizations for their aid in completing the Downtown survey: the staffs of the Mayor's Office of Community Development and the city Department of Planning and Urban Development, the Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, the Providence Athenaeum, the Providence Foundation, the Providence Preservation Society, the Providence Public Library, and the Rhode Island Historical Society Library. A special word of thanks goes to the *Interface: Providence* team, whose work on that publication provided a considerable body of information which expedited the research for this survey.



## I. SETTING

As the regional commercial center for Rhode Island and southeastern Massachusetts, Downtown Providence is both highly visible and readily identifiable as the focus of major economic activity. It appears as a compact cluster of commercial buildings — exceptional for American cities. Its vertical climax in a few tall office buildings, visible from afar, gives instant recognition of its role and its importance. From some distance — south from Narragansett Bay, west from Neutaconkanut Hill, northwest from Lincoln, northeast from southern Massachusetts, southeast from East Providence — these vistas assure the viewer that a city lies ahead.

Within the city, the central business district is well defined. The circular compactness of the Downtown sustains its visual centrality, located as it is in a topographical bowl with hills on three sides and water on a fourth. On Smith Hill to the north is McKim, Mead and White's imposing State House. Federal Hill rises gradually to the west. And on the east, the steep rise of College Hill provides a dramatic frame for Downtown. The area's proximity to and relationship with the water is now minimized: located at the head of Narragansett Bay and at the confluence of the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers, it was once surrounded on three sides by large bodies of water. Downtown now turns its back on the water, much as the city's economy has shifted from maritime trade. The topography is reinforced by the wide, high-speed interstate highways which wrap around Downtown to the south and east and by the railroad tracks, girdling Downtown on the north. This sense of physical containment is perhaps the most immediately singular aspect of Downtown Providence, setting it apart from most major American cities.

The downtown as a specialized place is largely a product of nineteenth- and twentieth-century industrialization and corporate growth. Rapid industrialization and trade required changes in the distribution modes of goods, services, and capital. Where distribution, merchandizing, and financing were once fairly simple, a heavily industrialized economy required specialization

of these functions. The downtown is a built response to these complex needs in the creation of a central place for organized and interconnected transportation systems, for the sale of goods and services, and for increasingly sophisticated economic exchanges, with the further specialization by areas within the central business district.

Downtown Providence follows in a large measure a form established during this period of economic expansion, maintaining street patterns, land use, and building types.

Bounded on the north by the railroad tracks, on the east by the Providence River, and on the south and west by I-195 and I-95 respectively, Downtown Providence occupies approximately one hundred and fifty acres. About a quarter of that area is given over to open space, with one third of the open space devoted to parks, plazas, and squares and the remaining two thirds used for parking lots. The nearly ten miles of streets form a grid system whose major axes run northeast-southwest and northwest-southeast. The major deviation from this pattern is Weybosset Street, which curves along the course of the aboriginal Pequot Trail.

There are approximately two hundred and fifteen buildings Downtown (the total varies depending on the method of counting). A brief analysis of the age, size, and use of these structures provides insight into the built character of the area. Nearly four fifths of the buildings Downtown were constructed between 1860 and 1940, with the majority of these erected before 1920. Less than ten per cent predate the Civil War. The remaining fifteen per cent have been constructed since World War II, and the great majority of these were built in the last fifteen years. Almost three quarters of Downtown buildings stand between three and seven stories. Nearly one fifth are one or two stories high. The remaining one tenth are eight stories high or more, with only three topping twenty stories. Just over a third of Downtown buildings are used exclusively or primarily for retail purposes, and just under a third are office buildings. Institutional activities fill one eighth of Downtown buildings, with recreational

use requiring slightly more. Transportation systems occupy between five and ten per cent of Downtown structures. Less than five per cent of the buildings are used for dwelling units. These statistics reinforce the visual impression of Downtown Providence: the predominant Downtown building is mid-rise, late Victorian or early twentieth century, and used for retail or office space.

Downtown Providence is best understood as six separate but interrelating areas. Each is characterized not only by a predominant land use or activity, but also by a concentration of building forms most suitable to that activity. These areas are not sharply delineated, and visual continuity generally exists among them.

The easternmost area is the financial district, bounded on the north by Kennedy Plaza and on the west by Dorrance Street. Traditionally the focus of financial institutions, the area still contains the greatest concentration of banks, brokerages, insurance companies, and professional offices in the state. Its center is the intersection of Westminster and Weybosset Streets, a fork now developed as a plaza and long known as Turk's Head. The largest buildings in Downtown have been built near Turk's Head, ranging from Providence's first tall, steel-frame structure, the Banigan Building of 1896, to the recent Hospital Trust Tower, erected in 1974. The area around Turk's Head was the site of the earliest development of the Downtown, and buildings such as the 1828 Arcade and the 1855 Merchants Bank recall this early growth.

Directly north of the financial district is the government and transportation center, focusing on Kennedy Plaza. This open space serves as a foil for the tall buildings immediately south. City Hall, the Federal Buildings, Union Station, Industrial National Bank, and the Biltmore Hotel dominate the perimeter of this largest open space in Downtown, which further serves as an important center for inter- and intra-city mass transit.

The area west of Dorrance Street and north of Pine Street, a densely built residential neighborhood before 1850, was gradually transformed into a retailing district

beginning after the Civil War. Today only three residential structures remain, two long-since adapted for commercial use. The stores erected in this area are generally three to six stories high and date between 1880 and 1920.

The area south of Pine Street, once the site of wharves and warehouses, gradually evolved as a light industrial district, the home of Providence's jewelry industry. Recently a number of these buildings have been razed for surface parking to accommodate the daily influx of automobiles, and the state has cleared a three-block site, replacing industrial buildings with a new court complex. Route I-95 cuts through the old industrial area, much of which remains intact south of the highway.

The area west of Empire Street has been largely rebuilt following the guidelines of the Downtown Master Plan developed in 1959 by the City Plan Commission and subsequently undertaken by the Providence Redevelopment Agency. A large open plaza, Cathedral Square, was completed in the 1960s, and low-rise, suburban-type office buildings, large residential complexes, and a civic center have gradually replaced decaying older structures.

The sixth area, though outside the boundaries established for this study, promises to become a critical part of Downtown in the next two decades. The Capitol Center project area lies between the State House Lawn on the north and Kennedy Plaza on the south, the Blackstone Canal on the east and I-95 on the west. The Capitol Center plan calls for moving the railroad tracks to just south of the State House Lawn, constructing a new station on Gaspee Street, recycling the present Union Station for commercial use, and opening the land between the moved and the existing tracks for new construction. The project aims at creating an urban, contemporary extension of the existing Downtown, utilizing large parcels of land unavailable in the existing Downtown. It will be essential that its development is shaped to make it an integral part of Downtown.



Fig. 2: Capitol Center Project; view of Skidmore-Owings-Merrill model from the north showing the relationship of the proposed improvements to the existing Downtown.

## II. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

### EARLY HISTORY: 1636-1828

Once an agricultural adjunct to the original settlement on the east side of the city, Downtown Providence is a cohesive urban environment created and nurtured by burgeoning nineteenth-century industrialization. Unsettled until the middle of the eighteenth century, the area that is now Downtown had grown from a small residential neighborhood at the beginning of the nineteenth century to the vital core of the City of Providence and the State of Rhode Island by the early twentieth century.

Providence was settled on the east side of the Providence River by Roger Williams and his followers in 1636. These refugees from the Puritan society in the Massachusetts Bay Colony established a settlement based on religious freedom and separation of church and state. Unlike other New England settlers, the founders of Providence (who built no church until 1700) had no use for a common square of ground dominated by a meetinghouse, and the town grew in linear fashion along a major axis parallel to the Providence River, today's North and South Main Street.

The future Downtown, west of the Providence River and known then as Weybosset Neck, remained unsettled for a century after colonization. The land was unappealing, dominated at its eastern end by the steep Weybosset Hill — which was surrounded by marshy lowlands — and traversed by Muddy Dock Creek — which followed the course of present-day Dorrance Street. To the north, the Great Salt Cove (filled at the end of the nineteenth century) separated the Weybosset Neck from the broad plains and rolling hills between the Woonasquatucket and Moshassuck Rivers. A bridge was built over the Providence River in 1660 to connect the town with the hinterland and

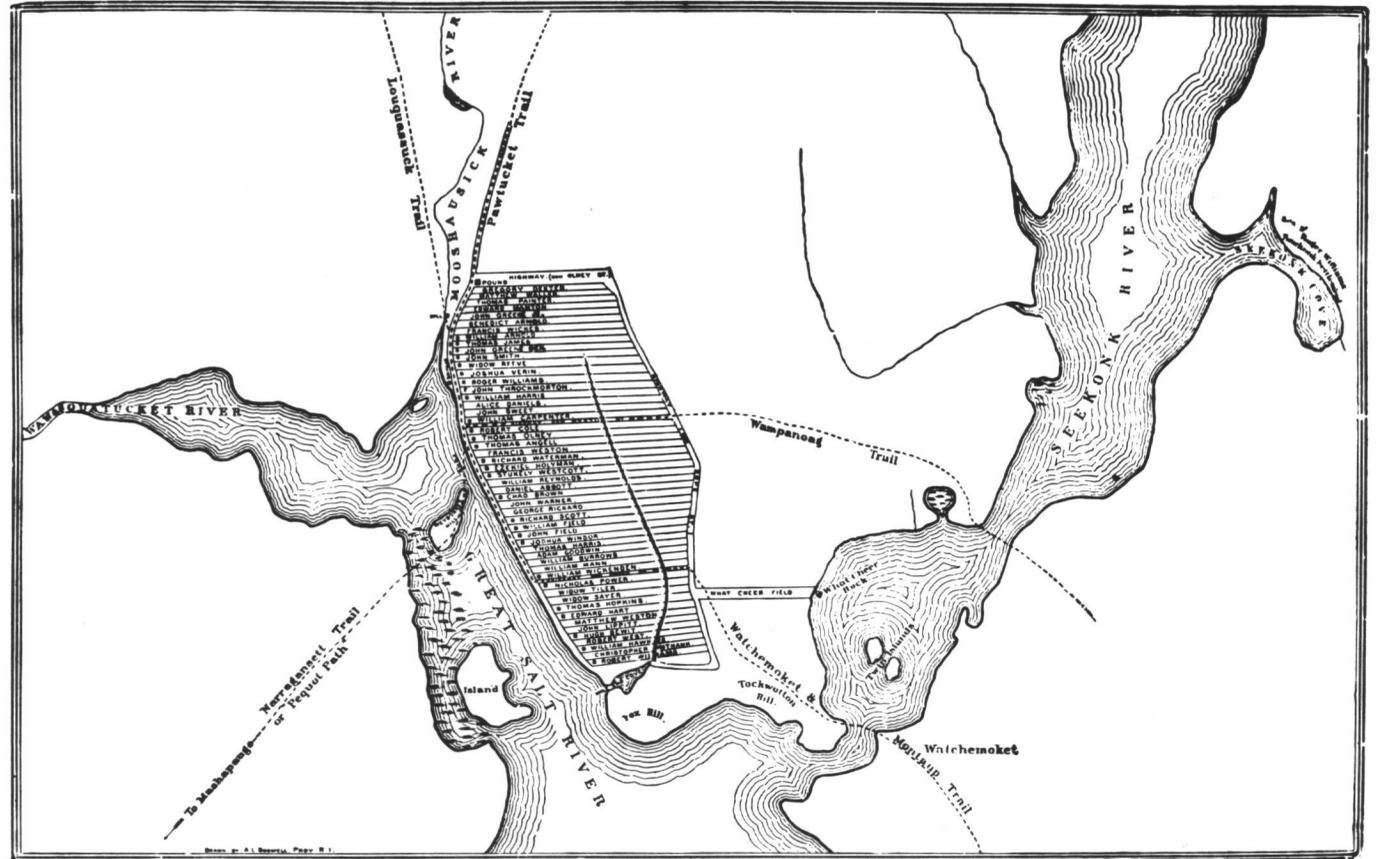


Fig. 3: Map of Providence (ca 1650). Showing the early settlement on the east bank of the Providence River and the Great Salt Cove as well as the isolation of the swampy west side.

the Pequot Trail (which followed present-day Weybosset Street), but it was found structurally unsound and demolished; the river was forded at low tide until a permanent link was effected in 1711.

Land on the Weybosset Side was gradually parcelled out to individuals in the early years of the eighteenth century, and settlement began, though

on a very limited basis until the leveling of Weybosset Hill — a rich source of clay for brick-making — began in 1724. The aborted attempt by the First Congregational Society to construct a meetinghouse on upper Weybosset Street in 1722 indicates the remoteness of the area; half constructed, it was disassembled and moved to a lot in the more settled part of town.

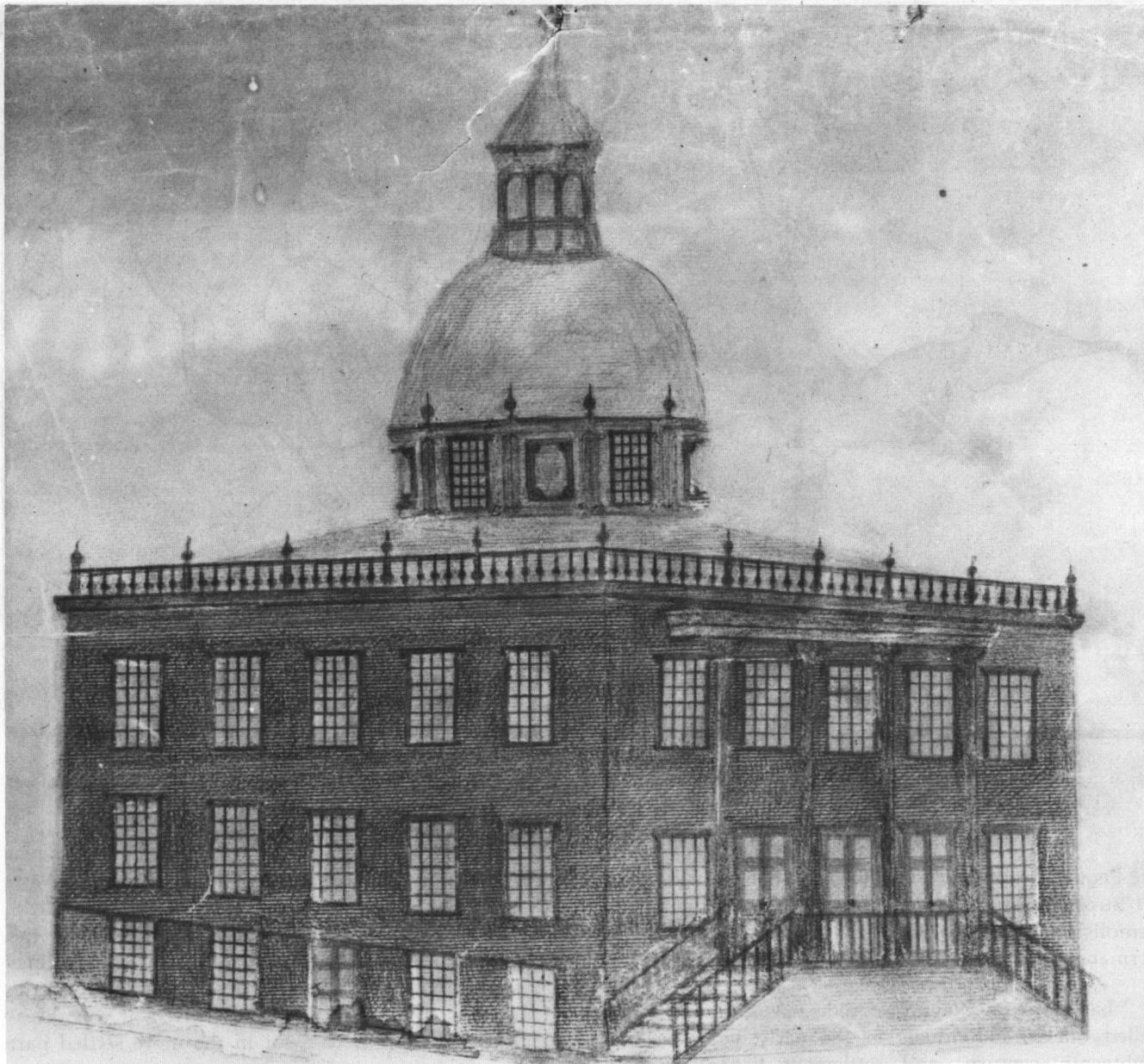


Fig. 4: Beneficent Congregational Church (1809); 300 Weybosset Street; sketch of the building before the Greek Revival alterations of 1836.

Impetus was given to settlement on the Weybosset Side when a group of dissidents from the First Congregational Society, led by the Reverend Joseph Snow, Jr, established the New Light Meeting House in 1746 on the site of the present Beneficent Congregational Church.

Daniel Abbott, impressed with the "true New England meetinghouse" quality of the venture, donated the land immediately east of the structure in 1746 as a village common, now Abbott Park.

Joseph Snow, Jr, provided not only spiritual leadership, but also the motivating force behind the development of the Weybosset Side in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. In 1749, Snow launched a major real-estate venture by forming a corporation to purchase the Mathewson Farm (bounded today by Washington and Weybosset Streets from Clemence Street to Cathedral Square). In 1751, Snow induced the new owners of this land to donate portions of it for a new street from Weybosset Bridge to present-day Cathedral Square: by 1753, Westminster Street had been extended as far west as Dorrance Street, and reached Cathedral Square by the later 1760s. This eighteenth-century community was thus chiefly responsible for the current street system; and a residential neighborhood was well established by 1800.

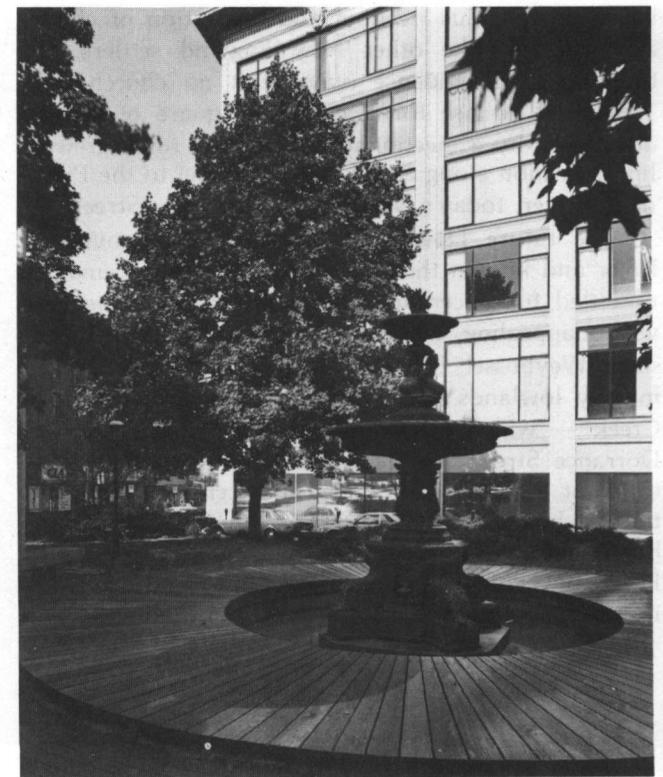


Fig. 5: Abbott Park (1746 et seq.). The fountain was erected in 1873.



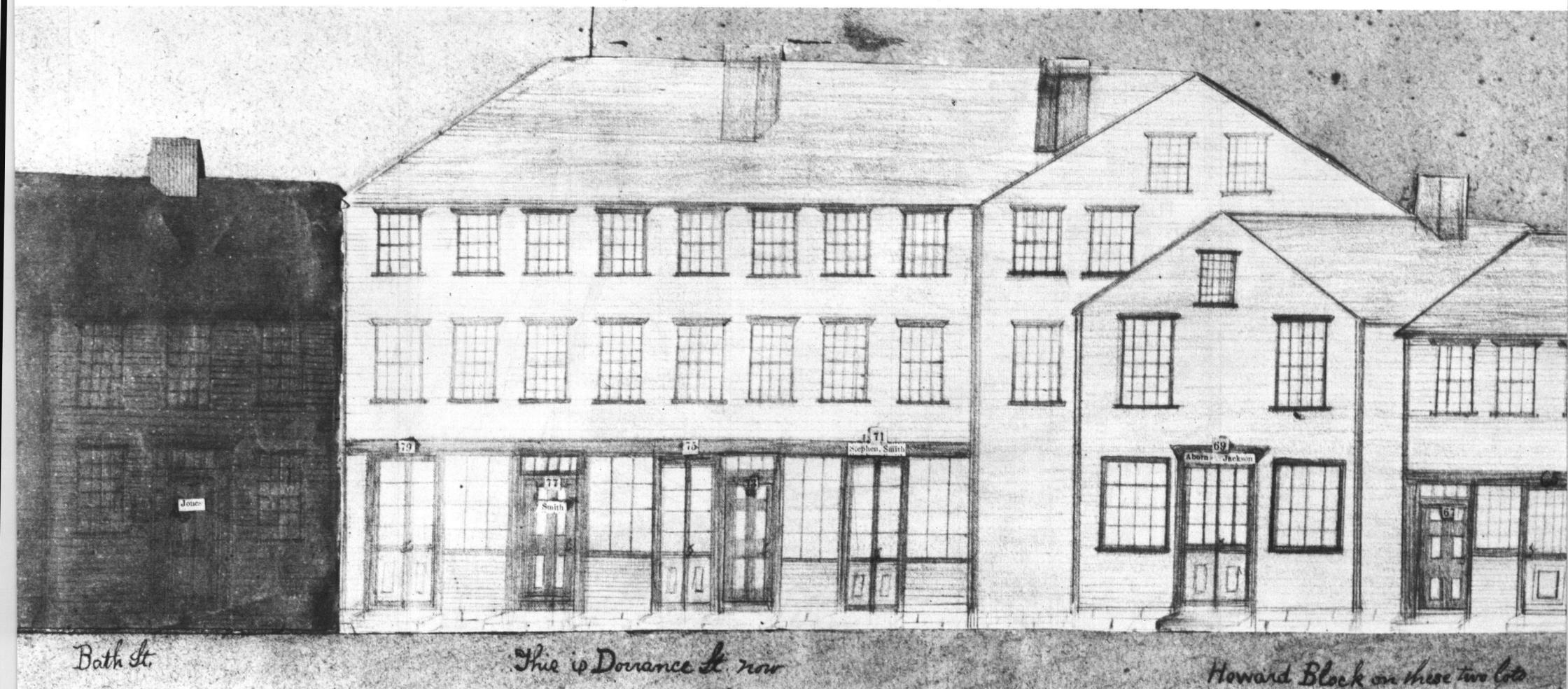


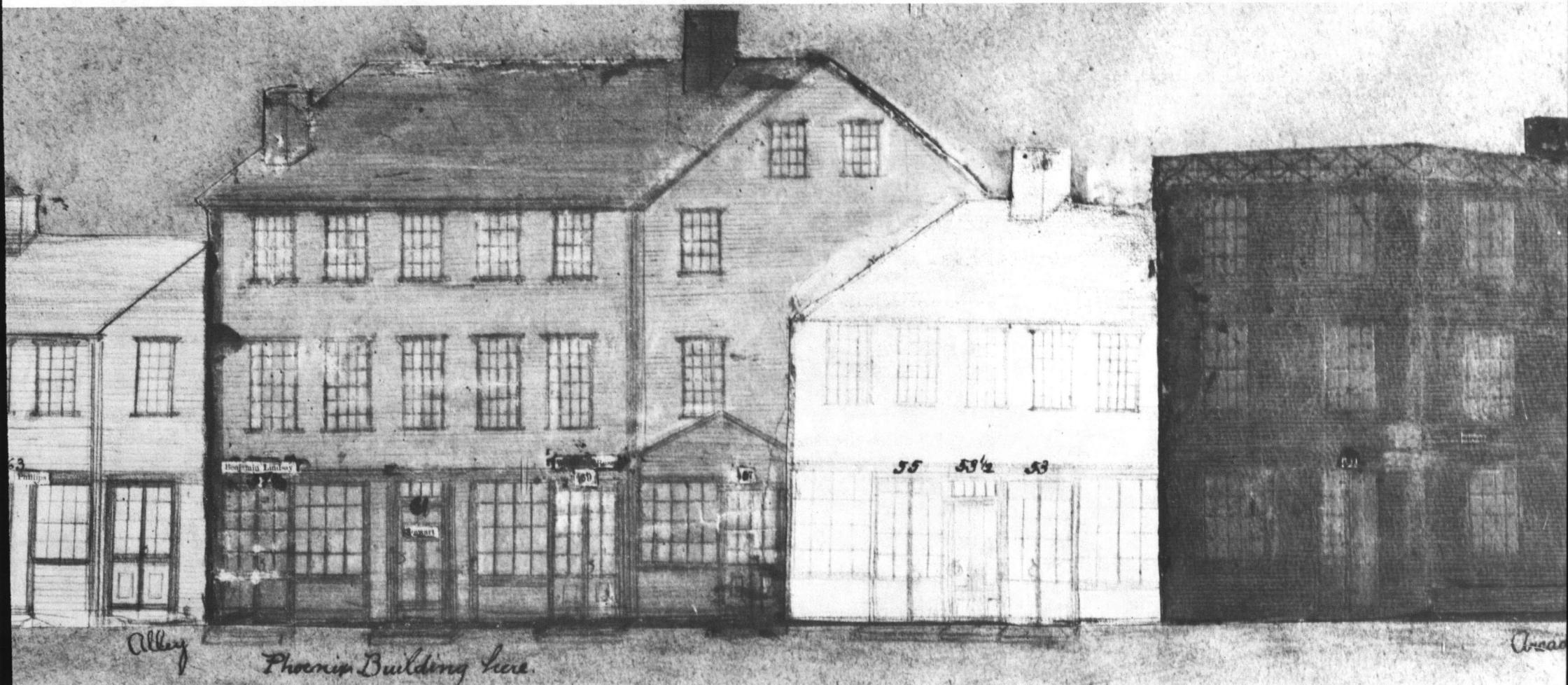
Fig. 7: Westminister Street (ca 1825). North side from Arcade Street to beyond Dorrance Street.

The Weybosset Side settlement was organized like that on the east side of the river. In typical eighteenth-century fashion, buildings and areas were multi-functional with work, living, distribution, industry, and business carried on in the same building or area. Buildings erected on the Weybosset Side were similar to contemporary ones on the East Side (many still standing on Benefit Street): two- or two-and-a-half story, wood-frame structures covered with clapboards. The municipal and commercial center remained, however, near Weybosset Bridge on Main Street, where

the Market House of 1773 housed mercantile activity and the Town House provided quarters for various public offices.

Several events of the last quarter of the eighteenth century provided new opportunities which in concert would change both the direction of Rhode Island's economy and ultimately Providence's built form. The town of Newport, twice the size of Providence in 1760 and far exceeding Providence as an important port, was occupied by the British during the Revolutionary

War, with a devastating effect on its economy; stripped of many of its assets, Newport declined after the war. Providence, on the other hand, was relatively unharmed and in a much sounder position for economic recovery and subsequent growth at the war's end. Consequently, Providence businessmen were more easily able to rely on mercantile trade for the acquisition and consolidation of wealth. The postwar growth of Providence's importance as a shipping center was signalled by the creation of two customs districts in the state in 1790, one in Newport and one in Provi-



dence. Established in an office on South Main Street, the first Custom House remained in this location until completion of the present Custom House on Weybosset Street in 1857. While shipping would continue for a time to provide major sources of revenue and would remain important throughout the nineteenth century, two manufacturing breakthroughs in the 1790s anticipated major nineteenth-century activities. In 1790, English immigrant Samuel Slater and Moses Brown of Providence commenced the spinning of cotton yarn at their mill in Pawtucket. Slater's knowledge of the Arkwright System and Brown's capital provided the first

successful textile mill in this country and, perhaps more important, the major basis for economic expansion for the succeeding century and a half. Two years later, Nehemiah Dodge began the production of inexpensive jewelry in Providence, an industry that continues to play a significant role in Rhode Island's economy.

These tentative industrial explorations were transformed into important economic components by events of the opening years of the nineteenth century. Shipping was hindered by the Napoleonic Wars in Europe,

crippled by the Embargo of 1807, and dealt a stunning blow by the War of 1812. The future of continued economic growth lay in industrial development, and textile manufacturing in particular received increasing attention after 1812. Rapid industrialization, the key to Rhode Island's economy in the early nineteenth century, required a more sophisticated and specialized marketplace for the exchange of goods, services, and capital.

The demand for a specialized commercial district increased at the turn of the nineteenth century, and its location west of the Providence River is due to a combination of factors. The eighteenth-century focus of commercial and public activity centered on the area around the Market House and along South Main Street. This area was densely built by 1800, and its growth was hampered by the steep rise of College Hill to the east and the Providence River to the west. This physical restraint was emphasized by a huge conflagration on 21 January 1801 which destroyed a total of thirty-seven structures along South Main Street. Several commercial institutions chose to relocate immediately across the river around Turk's Head, away from the congestion of South Main Street but still near the Market House.

The first major commercial enterprise to move across the river, Exchange Bank, established new quarters at the corner of Exchange and Westminster Streets in 1801 at the heart of what would become the financial center of Providence. Exchange Bank was followed in 1802 by the Washington Insurance Company<sup>1</sup> at the corner of Washington Row and Westminster Street and in 1814 by the Union Bank, which erected its offices at the corner of Westminster and Dyer Streets. The movement of the Post Office in 1802 from the Market House to the Whitman Block further signaled the growing importance of today's Turk's Head area as a commercial center.<sup>2</sup>

By the end of the 1820s, today's Downtown was a thriving area. Several new commercial blocks had been erected around Turk's Head, and this development

<sup>1</sup>The Washington Insurance Company merged with the Providence Insurance Company in 1812 to form the Providence Washington Insurance Company, still in existence.

<sup>2</sup>Turk's Head took its name from the ship's figurehead resembling a Turk that was displayed in the balustrade over the piazza of Jacob Whitman's house (ca 1750) which stood at the intersection of Westminster and Weybosset Streets. The eponymous sculpture was destroyed in 1815, but the place-name remained; the Turk's Head Building erected on this site in 1913 features the Turk's effigy in the stringcourse above the second story, reuniting the place-name with its source.

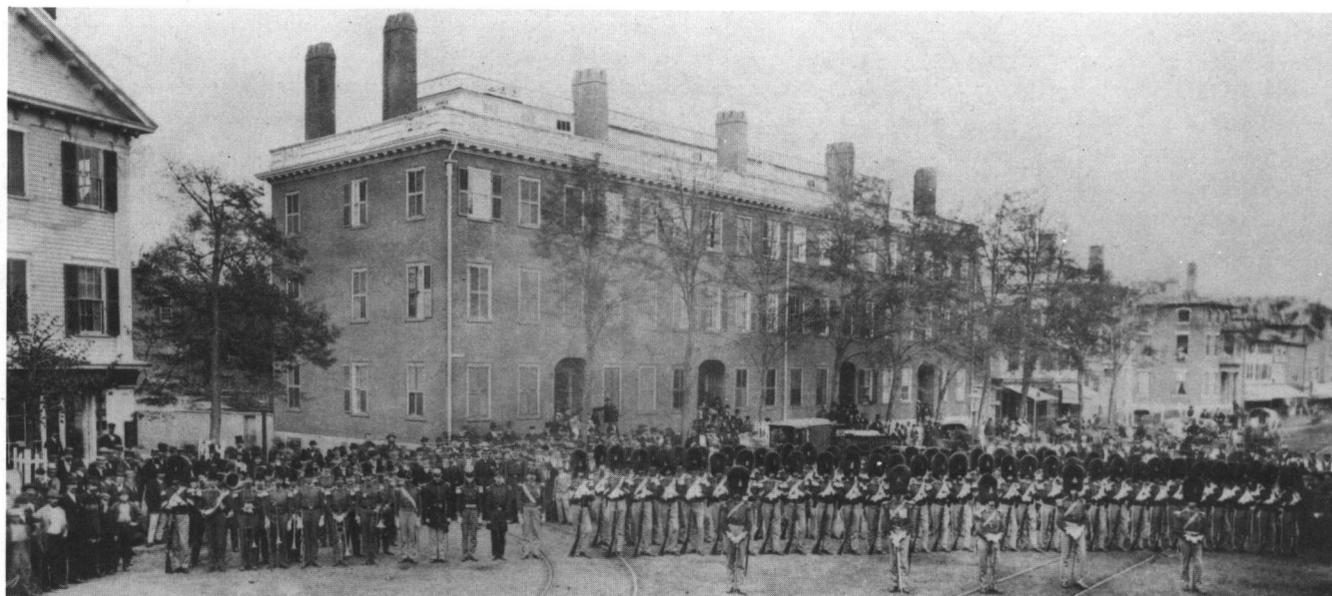


Fig. 8: Benjamin Dyer Block (ca 1820); 199-219 Weybosset Street; John Holden Greene, architect. The only known rowhouse in Greene's work, the Dyer Block is a linear extension of the contemporary Waterman House; this Civil War-era view shows the building before storefronts replaced the first story and the eastern half was remodeled in the Second Empire style.



Fig. 9: Daniel Abbott House (ca 1826); 33 Chestnut Street; John Holden Greene, architect.



Fig. 10: Stephen Waterman House (ca 1820); 189 Weybosset Street; John Holden Greene, architect. The plan and the detailing are typical of Greene's work, but the three-story format is rare.

reinforced the residential neighborhood farther west, which had become a fashionable place to live, with a number of impressive brick dwellings. Only three of these remain, all dating from the 1820s and all attributed to John Holden Greene, Providence's important early nineteenth-century architect-builder: the Stephen Waterman House at 181 Weybosset Street, the Benjamin Dyer Block at Weybosset and Mathewson Streets, and the Arnold-Palmer House at 33 Chestnut Street (moved from Westminster Street and restored in the 1960s). The growth of this residential neighborhood spawned the construction of a number of churches in the area, several of which survive today: Beneficent Congregational Church (built to replace the 1746 structure in 1809, altered to its present state in 1836), Grace Episcopal Church (1845), the Second Universalist Church (1847), Saints Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church (1838, replaced with the present structure in 1878), and Mathewson Street Methodist Church (1851, replaced with the present structure in 1895). While this residential neighborhood remained relatively intact until mid-century, the rapid growth of the industrial economy and the central business district dramatically altered its form during the century between the late 1820s and the late 1920s, when the Downtown we know today took form.

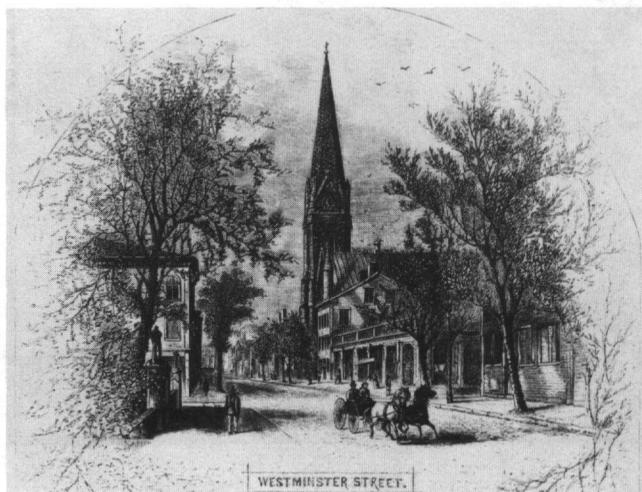


Fig. 11: Westminster Street, view east from Aborn Street; engraving ca 1870.

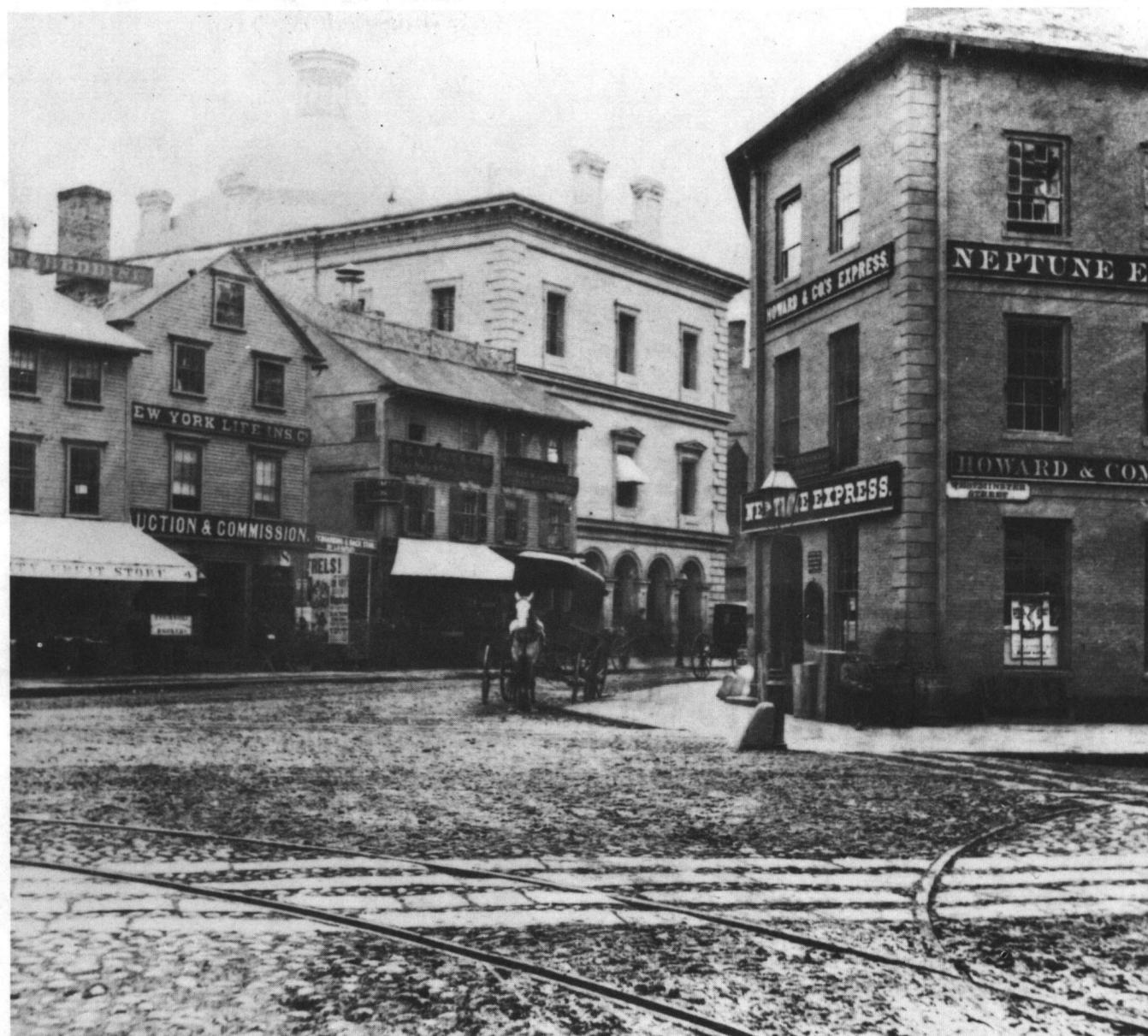


Fig. 12: Whitman Block (1825; demolished, ca 1910). One of the early commercial blocks erected Downtown, the Whitman Block established a precedent from the commercialization of the Turk's Head area. This view from ca 1870 shows how early dwellings — at left — were often converted to business use.

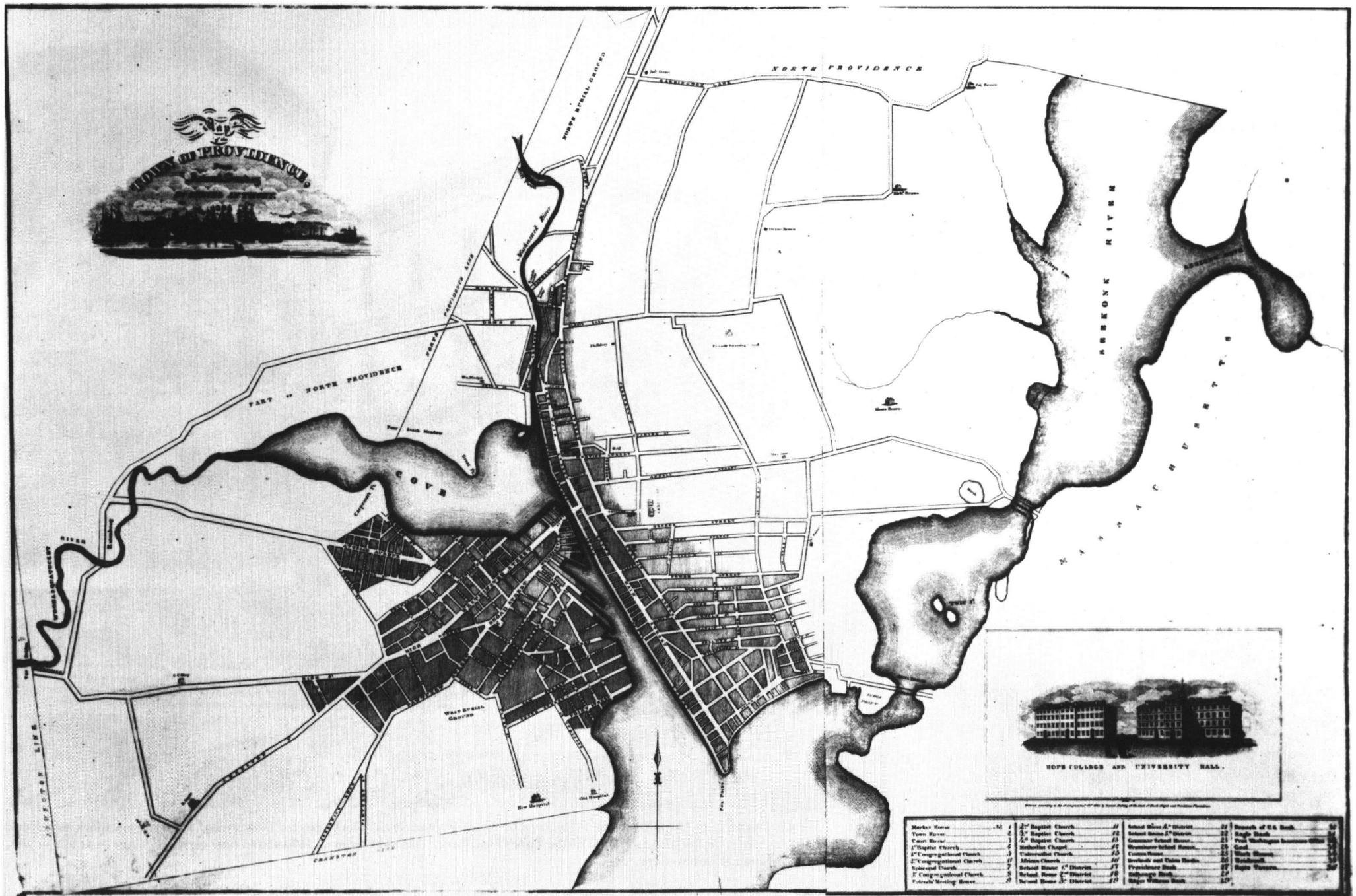


Fig. 13: Map of Providence (1823). Daniel Anthony's map shows the westward expansion through Downtown in the early 19th century.

## CENTURY OF GROWTH: 1828-1928

The transformation of Providence from a shipping port of some note to the major economic center of the most highly industrialized state in the nation was rapid and dramatic. Providence grew in population from 15,000 in 1824 to 253,000 in 1930, with much of this increase drawn from the waves of European immigrants who came seeking work. The physical form of the city changed enormously — with houses, factories, commercial buildings, schools, and churches constructed farther and farther from the Market House area — and the city pushed to its limits and soon expanded through annexation into areas of Cranston, Johnston, and North Providence. This expansion was aided by intra-city mass-transit systems and served by public water and sewage facilities. The urbanization of Providence was perhaps most dramatically illustrated in its Downtown, where building technology kept pace with economic

growth to produce larger, more innovative structures to house the numerous and increasingly specialized commercial and professional offices.

This century of growth can be handily bracketed by three major buildings in Downtown Providence. The Arcade, erected in 1828 by Cyrus Butler and the Arcade Realty Company, represents the first major commercial structure built on the Weybosset Side. More importantly, it represents an innovative shift in marketing concepts: by bringing together a number of shops under one roof, this early shopping mall effectively created a retail shopping zone and reinforced the creation of a central business district. In 1928, the Industrial National Bank represented the importance of Providence as a banking and industrial center in the epitome of stylistic and technological modernity; Loew's State Theatre typified the opulence standard in motion picture palaces built in major cities; together,

these two proclaim Providence's wealth and demonstrate a scale unthought of a hundred years previous. Rhode Island's economic growth began to stagnate in the late 1920s, and few buildings were constructed until the 1960s, none matching the lavishness and monumentality of these two erected in 1928.

The development and dynamics of a regional center rely on the complex and interdependent forces that shape it. The various functions of a downtown demand examination for understanding how a specialized, complex central business district comes into being and thrives. Key elements to any downtown include transportation, commerce, retail sales, and institutional and recreational activity. These elements are, not surprisingly, closely related to today's land-use areas in Downtown but cannot be considered directly correlative with these areas.



Fig. 14: The Arcade (1828); 130 Westminster Street; Russell Warren and James Bucklin, architects; photograph ca 1900.



Fig. 15: Industrial National Bank (1928); 111 Westminster Street; Walker & Gillette, architect. The lobby as it appeared on opening day in 1928.



Fig. 16: Loew's State Theatre (1928); 220 Weybosset Street; C. W. & George Rapp, architect. The lobby as it appeared on opening day in 1928.

## Transportation Center

Providence's location facilitated its development as a transportation center. Providence business leaders, in turn,

exploited the geographical advantages conferred upon them by the industrial trend (a trend they themselves started and abetted at every turn); and they capitalized upon every opportunity to make their city the economic center of an ever-widening hinterland. . . . Indeed, Providence entrepreneurs so clearly recognized the significance of transportation as an instrument for extending, consolidating, and protecting their economic influence that Rhode Island's transportation history is almost exclusively the story of the effort to expand the Providence hinterland.<sup>1</sup>

Sited on the mainland — unlike Newport — adjacent to a deep-water harbor and at the confluence of two rivers, Providence offered access to both water and overland routes.

The earliest transportation link was by sailing packet operations, which tied Providence to coastal towns along Narragansett Bay as well as with other East Coast port cities. The proliferation of coastal trade following the decline in foreign trade was particularly responsible for development of the wharf area on the west side of the Providence River. Ships could dock immediately adjacent to the growing Downtown and easily connect with overland routes to the hinterland. The pre-eminence of the west side of the river as a shipping center was emphasized by the removal of the Customs Office from South Main Street to quarters in the new Federal Building erected on Weybosset Street in 1857.

Roads to outlying parts were established by the early years of the eighteenth century, some following Indian trails, and these routes were improved and new ones added as turnpikes developed in the late eighteenth

and early nineteenth centuries. These routes fanned out from the area around the Market House, the center of commercial activity, bringing goods and people to the city. Overland freight transport was quite slow, however, and Providence merchants and manufacturers demanded and got more expeditious transportation systems in the first half of the nineteenth century.

A second, internal link was the Blackstone Canal, which followed the course of the Moshassuck and Blackstone Rivers between Providence and Worcester. Conceived in the 1790s but stifled by the Massachusetts legislature, which feared loss of Boston trade to an out-of-state competitor, the canal was finally incorporated by both legislatures in 1823. It opened 1 July 1828. Disputes over water rights marred its success from the start, and the utility of the canal was rendered obsolete by the coming of railroads in the 1830s. Plagued by financial difficulties, the Blackstone Canal ceased operation in 1848.

While coastal shipping, turnpikes, and the canal converging in the vicinity of Downtown reinforced its role as transportation and commercial center, the rail-

roads provided direct, rapid connection with other major East Coast cities. The Boston-to-Providence line, the city's first railway, opened in 1835 running from a terminal at India Point. The second road, running from Providence to Stonington, Connecticut, opened two years later. Its terminal was located on the west side of Providence Harbor, south of Downtown. The physical separation of these two terminals and the lack of coordination between the two independent railroad companies made through service difficult: trains from the south stopped at the west side of the Providence Harbor, whence passengers and cargo were ferried to the India Point terminal to meet northbound trains. Southbound traffic often boarded ship in Providence to continue the trip from Boston to New York. The need for continuous rail lines through Providence brought about the first major physical transformation Downtown.

In 1844, the Providence and Worcester Railroad was incorporated to build a line between those two cities, with the southern terminal in the central business district. In January of 1846, the City Council approved plans for the partial filling of the Cove, and the con-



Fig. 17: Hay Building (1868) and Owen Block (1867 et seq.); 101-135 Dyer Street. Two of the few remaining warehouses that lined the west side of the Providence River when this area served as the city's port.

<sup>1</sup>Peter J. Coleman, *The Transformation of Rhode Island: 1790-1860* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1963), p. 161.



Fig. 18: Exchange Place; photograph, ca 1883.

struction of retaining walls around an elliptical Cove Basin, with the railroad track running along its southern edge. The following year, the City Council approved a petition by the New York, Providence and Boston Railroad to extend the Stonington line to connect with the Worcester Railroad. Shortly after, the Boston and Providence Railroad reached an agreement to connect with the Providence and Worcester line to Providence at Central Falls, thereby abandoning the India Point terminal. Construction of a terminal at the convergence of these three railroads, appropriately named Union Station, was completed in 1848.

The seven-building Union Station complex was designed by Thomas A Tefft, Providence's leading

mid-nineteenth-century architect, and built of brick in the Lombard Romanesque style. It included the passenger depot, located on the site of the present north roadway of Kennedy Plaza; freight depots for each of the railroads (a portion of the Boston and Providence Depot still stands on Canal Street); engine houses for each railroad; and a work shop for the Providence and Worcester Railroad. Perhaps equally as important as — and far more permanent than — the first Union Station was the creation of a major open space Downtown, known until 1964 as Exchange Place. Just as the name Union Station signified the junction of three hitherto separate rail lines, so the name Exchange Place underscored the significance of the interface of a major transportation system with the growing commercial

district. The southern side of Exchange Place became a desirable location for new office buildings, which included the Wheaton and Anthony Building (1855) and the Butler Exchange (1873) on the site of Industrial National Bank. The City of Providence reinforced the area's importance as a metropolitan focal point in the mid-1850s by purchasing the lot at the western end for the eventual construction of a city hall.

The relocation of the railroad further aided industrialization by providing improved access to factories in Providence. Early industries had located along the Moshassuck and Woonasquatucket Rivers for power, processing, and waste disposal. The railroad, passing through the industrializing village of Olneyville and



Fig. 19: Union Railroad Depot (1867; demolished, 1897); Market Square.



Fig. 20: Union Station (1898); Exchange Terrace; Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architect; photograph, ca 1898.

along both rivers, made direct factory freight connections simpler.

Three later railroads improved Providence's service. The Providence, Warren and Bristol Railroad (1855) and the Fall River, Warren and Providence Railroad (1860) provided access to the East Bay. The Providence, Hartford and Fishkill connected Providence with eastern Connecticut by 1854.

These railroads radiating from Providence did more than any other transportation system to realize the expansion of the hinterland. Goods from throughout the state, from eastern Connecticut, and from southeastern and western Massachusetts were funneled through Providence. Providence became a major regional marketplace, and the resulting expansion of trade and manufacturing provided additional capital for ensuring industrial growth.

The growth of Providence by the mid-nineteenth century had pushed development farther and farther from Downtown. This growth encouraged the development of intra-city mass transit, which in turn aided the residential development of outlying lands by improving workers' access to housing farther from their place of employment. Street railways — later replaced by trolleys and eventually by buses — further reinforced the nineteenth-century trend toward specialized land use and allowed for the concentration of like functions in distinct areas.

The first street railway, the Union Railroad Company, began operation of a line from Market Square to Olneyville in 1865. Service was extended to Broadway, Elmwood, South Providence, and Cranston later that year, and by the mid-1870s routes were established along major thoroughfares throughout the city, with the central terminal located on the bridge across the Providence River at the east end of Westminster Street. The proximity of the street railway terminal to Union Station further facilitated passenger travel, allowing an individual to board the street railway near his home, then transfer Downtown to a train for Boston or New York.



Fig. 21: Exchange Place (ca 1919). World War I parade of returning soldiers and sailors.

Later developments in the inter-city and intra-city mass transit systems improved the service established in the mid-nineteenth century, but no substantive changes were made to the system. The present Union Station provided more sophisticated means for handling the increased passenger and freight demands, and further solidified Providence's position as a major regional center when, in 1909, the East Side rail tunnel was completed, linking the main railroad with the suburban line to East Providence, Warren, and Bristol. The station remained, however, at the heart of Downtown. Exchange Place, enlarged by the filling of the Cove and the location of the new Union Station five hundred feet north, provided a more convenient and central location for the main trolley shelter, erected at the western end of Exchange Place in 1914 and still used as the gathering point for many bus lines.

The shift in twentieth-century transportation modes did much to diffuse the focus of Downtown Providence as a concentrated central commercial center.

Ever growing use of the automobile after the First World War had three major effects upon Downtown. It lessened dependence upon public transportation for large segments of the population, thereby enabling offices, stores, and factories to move to newer facilities in more sparsely populated suburban and rural areas, as well as encouraging the suburbanization of residential communities. The automobile also made its physical presence felt Downtown as increasing numbers of workers and shoppers traveled by car to reach Downtown destinations, daily necessitating vast amounts of temporary parking space for their vehicles in an already densely built area. Parking was first provided along street curbs, but parking garages were coming into use by the 1920s. Particularly after World War II — and as suburbanization lessened demand for commercial space Downtown — lesser-used buildings were demolished for off-street parking lots and for new multi-level parking garages. Today the area south of Pine Street, once filled with industrial buildings, is now given over almost exclusively to surface parking. Finally, the con-

struction of the Interstate Highway system in the 1950s and 1960s enclosed and physically limited Downtown. Fortunately, the highways do not smash through Downtown, but exist just outside it and reinforce its centrality through definition and accessibility.



Fig. 22: Narragansett Hotel Garage (1923); 98 Dorrance Street. One of the first parking structures Downtown.

## Commerce

Specialized business enterprises as we know them today developed in Rhode Island largely to meet the demands of industrialization. Banks and insurance companies in particular trace their earliest activity here to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when the economy began to shift from a mercantile to an industrial base. That Providence became the center of these activities in the first half of the nineteenth century is not surprising, for Providence's developing transportation system, existing wealth, and entrepreneurial spirit required more sophisticated means of financing and insuring increasingly complex business ventures.

The first bank in the state was organized by John and Moses Brown as the Providence Bank in 1791 and chartered by the legislature the following year. It remained the only bank in Providence until the first decade of the nineteenth century. Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, the increase of banking facilities was tied to the business cycle itself; in good times, many new banks were chartered; in bad, few or none.

Insurance companies began to appear at the same time. While risk pools for maritime ventures existed in the middle of the eighteenth century, these were limited in scope and duration. The earliest and most successful of the insurance companies, Providence Insurance Company, was founded in 1799. Providence Mutual and the Washington Insurance Company followed in



Fig. 23: Washington Buildings (1843); Washington Row; James C. Bucklin, architect; photograph, ca 1865.

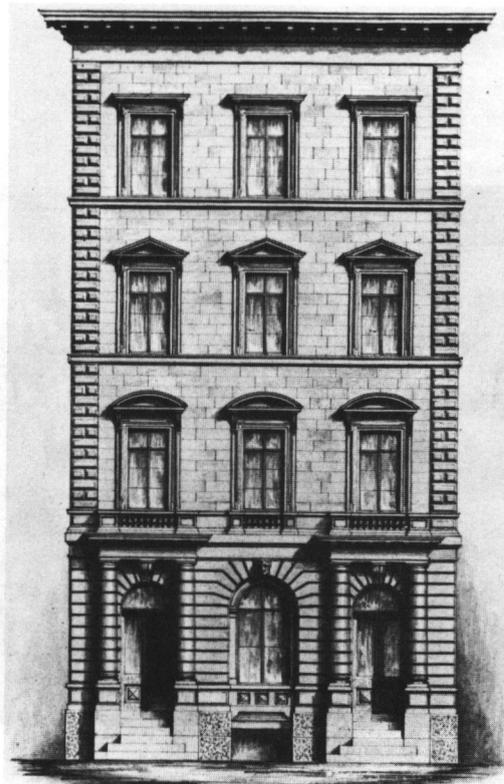


Fig. 24: Bank of North America (1854); 48 Weybosset Street; Thomas Tefft, architect.

1800, the latter being the first to locate on the west side of the Providence River.

These financial institutions began to cluster around Turk's Head in the early nineteenth century, and by mid-century, a number of monumental buildings were built to house these important commercial enterprises. In 1843, the Providence Washington Insurance Company erected the Washington Building on Washington Row; the three-story, block-long Greek Revival structure, designed by James Bucklin, was demolished in 1916 for the construction of the Hospital Trust Bank Building. Bucklin was also responsible for the design of the 1845 Exchange Bank Building at the southwest corner of Exchange Street and Exchange Place. Three important commercial buildings, all in the Italianate style, were constructed around Turk's Head in the 1850s. The four-story Bank of North America Building

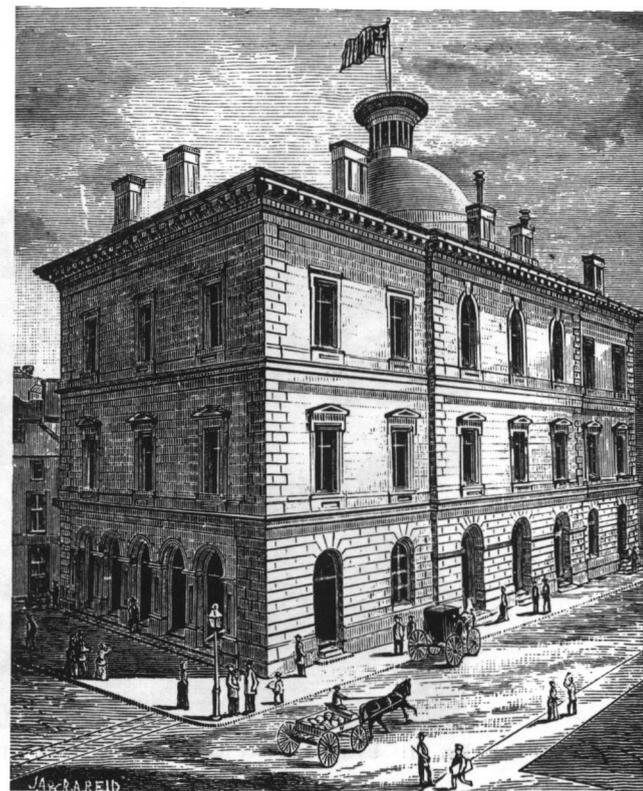


Fig. 25: Providence Federal Building (1857); 24 Weybosset Street; Ammi B. Young, architect; engraving, ca 1886.

at 48 Weybosset Street and the Merchants Bank Building at 20 Westminster Street represented the growth of banking during these years. The Federal Building (known as the Custom House; Ammi B. Young, architect) at 24 Weybosset Street consolidated the growing number of various United States government agencies in one location at the corner of Weybosset and Custom House Streets, close both to the core of the central business district and to shipping activity along the Providence River.

By 1860, Providence was well established as the banking center for the state, with nearly forty banks capitalized at over fifteen million dollars and three times more capital per resident than any other town in the state. This preeminence signaled not only the importance of Providence as a commercial center, but also the vast amounts of risk capital flowing into the

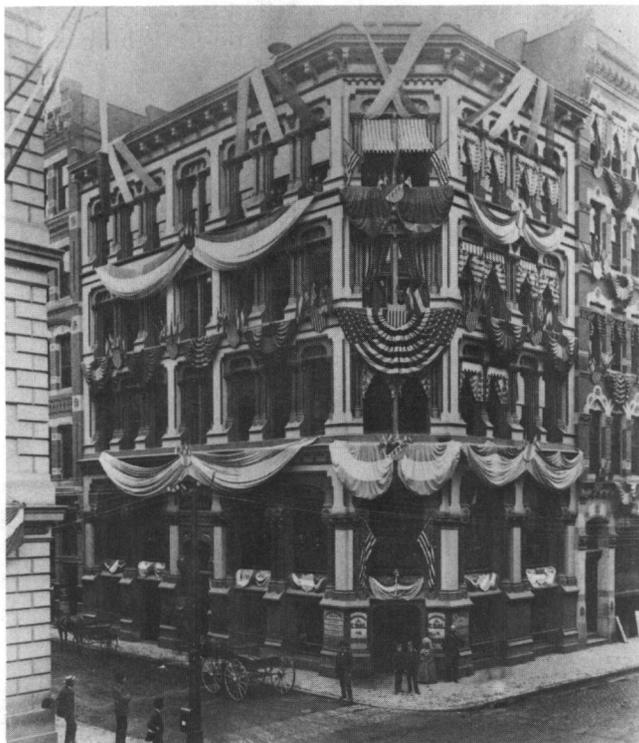


Fig. 26: Equitable Building (1872); 36 Weybosset Street; Walker & Gould, architect. This photograph from 1886 shows the building decorated for the celebration of the two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Providence.



Fig. 27: Wheaton and Anthony Building (1872); 65 Westminster Street; Alfred Stone, architect. This 1912 photograph, taken just before construction began on the Turk's Head Building, provides a rare glimpse of this structure head on.

industrial economy. The Civil War further spurred industrial growth: Burnside Rifle Works, Providence Tool Company, and Builders Iron Foundry produced weapons for Union troops; Providence woolen mills expanded production to provide uniforms; and the textile industry decisively captured the growing domestic market from foreign competition because of the blockade of the Southern ports and the consequent cessation of cloth making in England.

The growth of industry in the late 1860s is visibly demonstrable in Downtown construction. The newly chartered Atlantic Bank built its headquarters on Weybosset Street west of the Arcade in 1866. The Equitable Fire and Mutual Insurance Company moved from Market Square to an elaborate cast-iron-facade building at 36 Weybosset Street in 1872; no doubt its solid masonry-and-cast-iron structure provided safer quarters and, not incidentally, better promotion of the company's services than the previous quarters. The same year also saw the construction of another cast-iron-facade building in the financial district, the Wheaton and Anthony Building at 75 Westminster Street. Like the first Wheaton and Anthony Building directly north of it on Exchange Place, this structure housed Downtown offices for outlying mills and professional offices (including those of the architects for the building). The Wilcox Building at 42 Weybosset Street (1875) and Hall's Building (1876), immediately across the street at number 45, provided office space for smaller insurance firms, attorneys, and other professionals. The largest private structure erected during the post-war boom was the six-story Butler Exchange Building erected in 1873. It provided a large amount of office space consolidated in one location at the middle of the financial district as well as a shopping arcade on ground level which, in concert with that of the Arcade, provided a direct thoroughfare between Union Station on Exchange Place and the financial district on Weybosset Street. That its developer was Cyrus Butler, developer of the Arcade, is noteworthy and demonstrates the vision of nineteenth-century Providence entrepreneurs in creating a workable, urbane commercial center. The architect for the project, Arthur Gilman, was imported from Boston; he is perhaps the first of a long line of architects from Boston and New York brought in to design commercial structures Downtown.

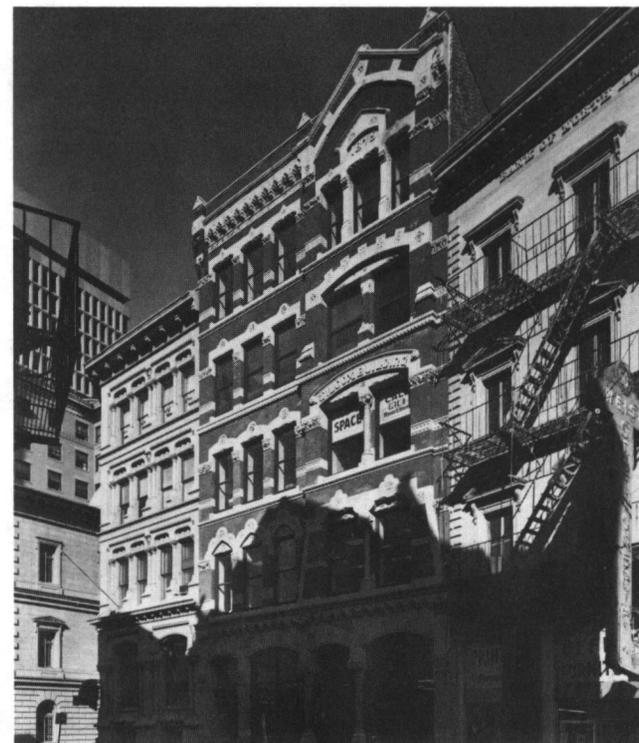


Fig. 28: Wilcox Building (1875); 42 Weybosset Street; Edwin L. Howland, architect. Rehabilitated following a fire in 1975, the building acquired a handsome modern storefront.



Fig. 29: Butler Exchange (1873); Exchange Place; Arthur Gilman, architect; engraving, 1886.

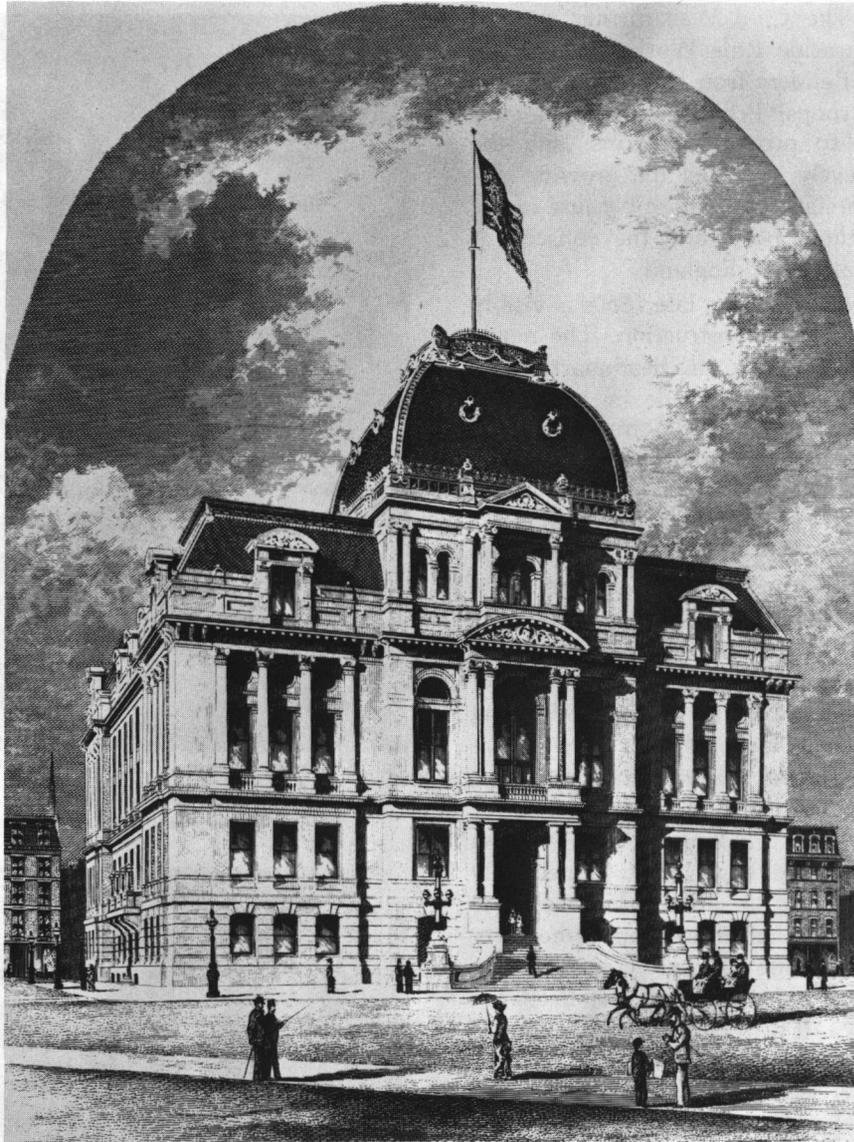


Fig. 30: City Hall (1874-1878); 25 Dorrance Street; Samuel F. J. Thayer, architect.

The rapid growth of the city in the middle nineteenth century necessitated the growth and specialization of the public sector. City government, like industry and commerce, became more complex during these years, and its importance, like that of the private sector, was also monumentalized in built form. The

organization of city government was largely effected during the tenure of Mayor Thomas A. Doyle (1864-1869, 1870-1881, 1884-1886), whose major civic project of the 1870s, the construction of City Hall, not only provided much-needed office space for the growing city government, but also gave definition to the west

end of Exchange Place. Designed in the Second Empire style by Samuel F. J. Thayer of Boston, the building was erected between 1874 and 1878.

City Hall represents one of the few new projects begun Downtown in the mid-1870s, for the Panic of 1873 and the ensuing recession quelled most construction until the end of the decade. Expansion of industry and depreciation of paper money had made overextension of credit easy, and when panic beset markets in New York, a number of financial houses throughout the country closed their doors. The largest single company in the country to fail was the Rhode Island-based A. & W. Sprague Manufacturing Company, which produced calico in seven large complexes throughout the state and controlled five banks. The collapse of this financial empire sent shock waves throughout the Rhode Island business community, dissipating the industrial supremacy the state had retained into the 1870s. Few banks in the state escaped serious

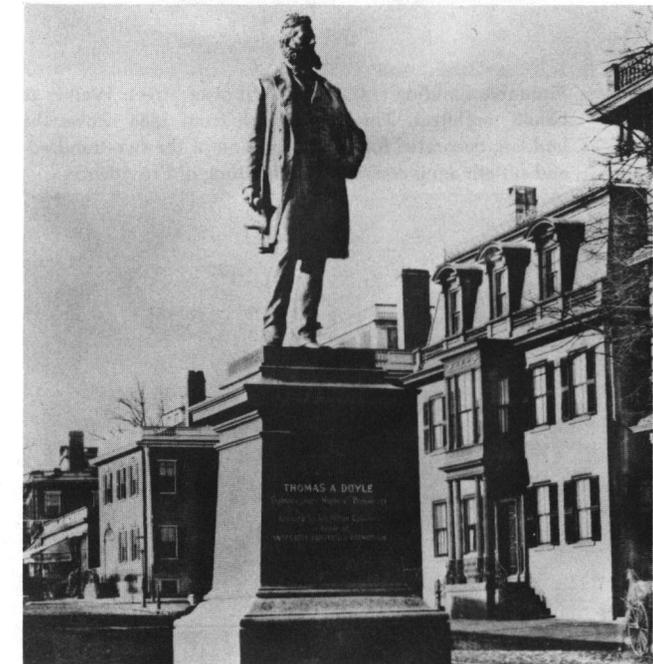


Fig. 31: Thomas Doyle Monument (1889); Henry H. Kitson, sculptor. This 19th-century photograph shows the statue in its original location in front of the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul.



Fig. 32: Lauderdale and Francis Buildings (1894); 144 and 150 Westminister Street; Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architect.



Fig. 33: Exchange Bank Building (1888); 59-63 Westminister Street; Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architect; photograph by John R. Hess, ca 1915.

losses, fifteen banks closed, and national banks consolidated, became trust companies, or were absorbed by trust companies.<sup>1</sup>

The last two decades of the nineteenth century were generally prosperous: though the economy was beset at least once a decade by recessions, these setbacks were less catastrophic than that of 1873. Continuing economic growth during these years supported the construction of larger, taller office buildings which gave Downtown much of its present form, and many of the buildings and institutions that still predominate Downtown date from this period.

In 1885, the Conrad Building was erected considerably west of Turk's Head at the corner of Westminister and Aborn Streets. One of the increasing number of investment properties — built neither to house a company headquarters nor a major tenant — it represents the growth of personal wealth and the diversion of this wealth into a less liquid but more stable investment, real estate.

Turk's Head acquired a number of new structures during these years, with a heavy concentration of new banking facilities. In 1886, Exchange Bank replaced the southern half of its 1845 building, at the northwest corner of Westminister and Exchange Streets, with new headquarters. Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company, founded in 1867 for the benefit of Rhode Island Hospital, moved from South Main Street in 1891 to its new banking houses, designed by R. W. Gibson of New York, at 15 Westminister Street (demolished 1916). The following year, the Industrial Trust Company moved into an 1870 structure renovated for its use by Stone, Carpenter and Willson at the northeast corner of Westminister and Exchange Streets (demolished early 1970s). The Banigan Building, erected at 10 Weybosset Street in 1896, was the most modern structure in Providence: the ten-story, steel-frame, "fireproof" building, designed by Winslow and Wetherell of Boston, was Providence's first skyscraper. Two other nearby struc-

<sup>1</sup>Florence Parker Simister, *The First Hundred Years* (Providence: Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company, 1967), pp. 21-23.

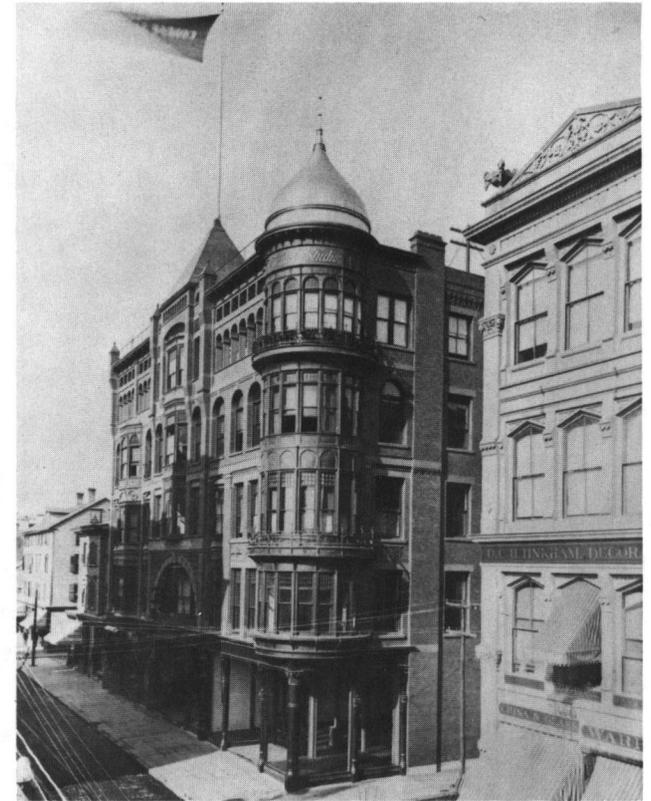


Fig. 34: Conrad Building (1885); 391 Westminister Street; Stone Carpenter and Willson, architect; photograph, ca 1885.

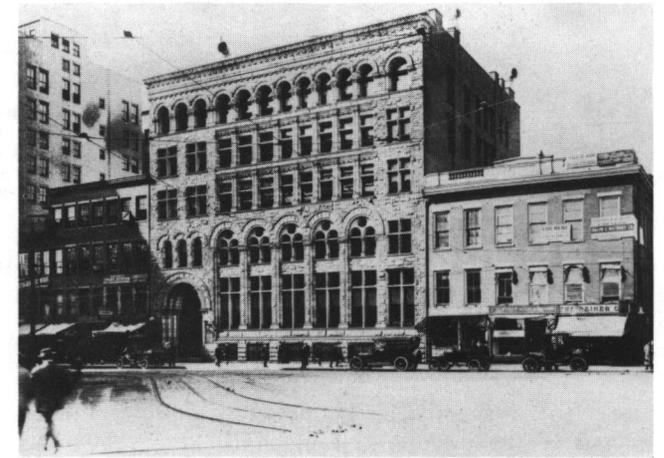


Fig. 35: Rhode Island Hospital Trust National Bank (1891); 15 Westminister Street; R. W. Gibson, architect; photograph, ca 1915.



Fig. 36: Banigan Building (1896); 10 Weybosset Street; Winslow & Wetherell, architect; photograph, ca 1910.

tures, the Francis and Lauderdale Buildings, were erected in 1894; like the Banigan Building, they too were constructed as investment properties.

While the last two decades of the nineteenth cen-



Fig. 37: Union Trust Company Building (1901); 62 Dorrance Street; Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architect; engraving, ca 1905.

tury gave final definition to the present Downtown fabric, the first three decades of the twentieth century represent a culmination of the vigorous growth of the central business district that began in the first half of the previous century. Industrial activity continued

apace as the primary support of Rhode Island's flourishing economy, and the prosperity of these years reinforced Providence as a regional commercial center with increased construction of office and commercial space Downtown.



Fig. 38: Turk's Head Building (1913); 7-17 Weybosset Street; Howells and Stokes, architect; photograph, ca 1913.

Major construction continued to center around Turk's Head, but the increasing demand for office space could not be met entirely in this small area, and office buildings began to appear in significant numbers west of Dorrance Street for the first time. The Banigan Building's massiveness was tantamount to a challenge

to subsequent office buildings, which grew increasingly taller. The twelve-story Union Trust Building (1901) — housing that bank's headquarters — became the tallest building Downtown. It was topped by the seventeen-story Turk's Head Building in 1913. Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company erected its massive,



Fig. 39: Industrial National Bank Building (1928); 111 Westminster Street; Walker and Gillette, architect; photograph ca 1928.

eleven-story headquarters at the eastern end of Westminster Street in 1919. Perhaps the most distinctive of these skyscrapers — and certainly the best known to all Rhode Islanders — is the Industrial Bank Building, the last major office building of Providence's "century of progress."



Fig. 40: Telephone Company Building (1893, 1906); 112 Union Street; Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architect; engraving, ca 1910.

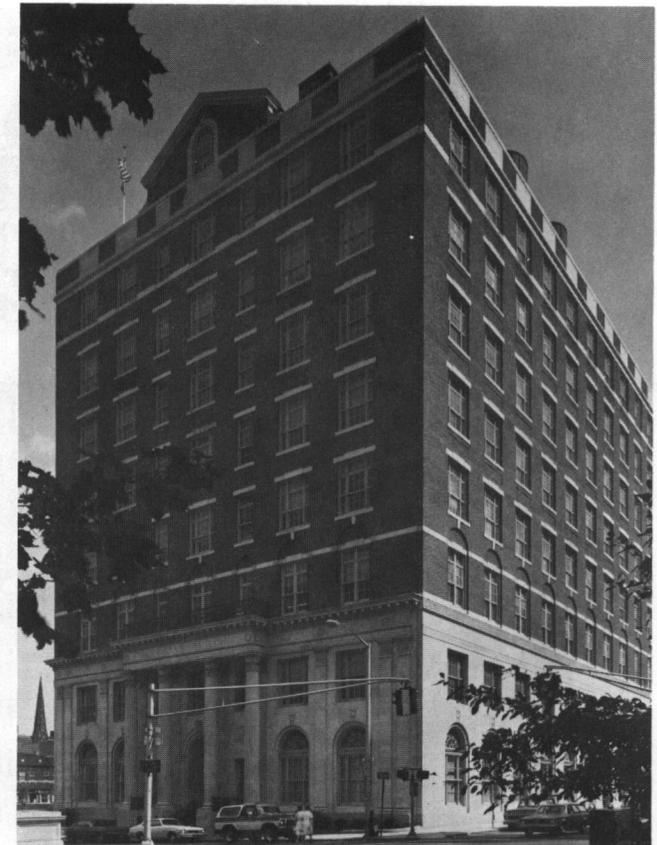


Fig. 41: Telephone Company Building (1917, 1971); 234 Washington Street; Clarke & Howe, architect. The parapet and pedimented central gable are later additions.



Fig. 42: George C. Arnold Building (1923); 100 Washington Street.

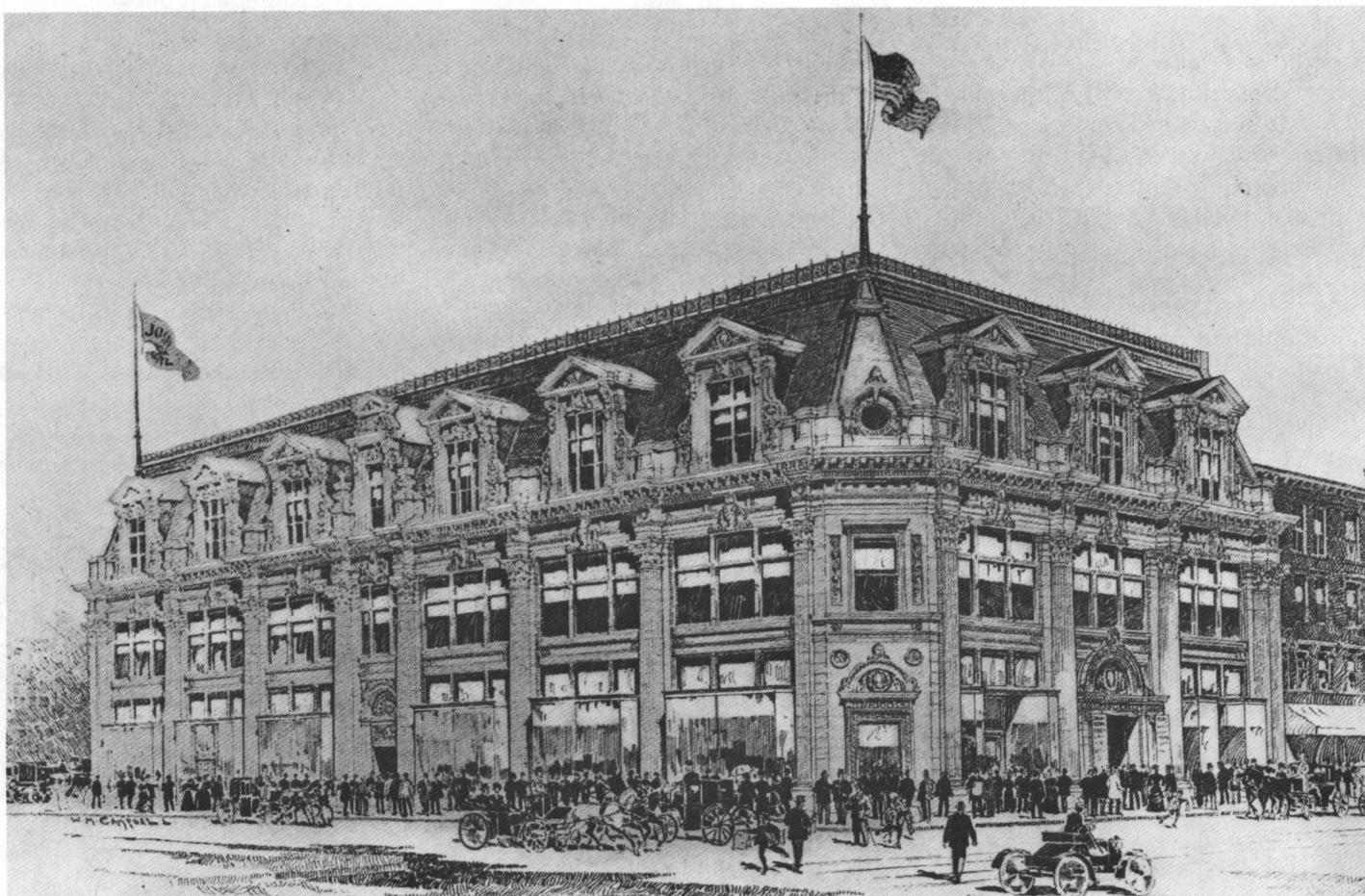


Fig. 43: Providence *Journal* Building (1903); 209 Westminster Street; Peabody & Stearns, architect; engraving, ca 1907.

Providence's importance as a communication center was emphasized by the rapid growth of its newspaper and its telephone company, which built increasingly larger headquarters Downtown, all located west of Dorrance Street. Telephones had been introduced to Providence in 1879, and by 1893 the need for a centralized office led to the construction of the building at 112 Union Street. By 1917, the Telephone Company had outgrown these quarters and moved to its new eight-story headquarters at 234 Washington Street. The Providence *Journal* Company, located for much of the nineteenth century on lower Westminster Street, built new headquarters at the northeast corner of

Westminster and Eddy Streets in 1906. Its elaborate presence on the street gives architectural expression to the importance of the *Journal* as a major metropolitan newspaper with a regional circulation. The paper continued to grow in size and importance during this century, outgrowing its quarters in less than thirty years. The company moved in 1934 to a larger structure on Fountain Street, the only major construction Downtown between the late 1920s and the late 1930s.

The other office buildings erected west of Dorrance Street were generally smaller. After 1900, Wash-

ington Street developed as a secondary commercial corridor, with three-to-five-story structures. Typical of these last additions to Downtown office space are the George C. Arnold Building (1923) at 100 Washington Street and the Siegal Building (1928) at 150 Washington Street.

Providence's importance as a commercial center was well established by the time of the Stock Market Crash in 1929. The ensuing depression effectively ended the city's growth, which had already begun to slow considerably in the 1920s, and little commercial expansion occurred until the bull market of the 1960s.

## Retail

The chief function of a central business district is as a marketplace, serving both corporate entities and private citizens. While merchant shops had existed in Providence since colonization, the growth and specialization of the economy during the nineteenth century brought tremendous changes to the marketing of retail goods.

The importance of one of the first and now the oldest shopping center in the nation, the Arcade, cannot be overstated. It not only allowed the concentration of retail in one location, but also established a precedent for retail Downtown. While retail markets were established in all downtowns, few cities had any-

thing so early as the Arcade to symbolize in built form this sector of a downtown economy.

Shops tended to cluster through the first half of the nineteenth century both in the older commercial area along South and North Main Streets and around the Arcade, located near Turk's Head, the heart of Downtown. But as Providence thrived and as demand for office space around Turk's Head increased after mid-century, two forces radically changed the retail market. First, retail operations of all kinds began to locate west of Dorrance Street — particularly on Westminster Street — creating a retail shopping district immediately west of the financial district. Second, the growth of the retail market reached a critical mass, beyond which certain economies of scale gave rise to larger, diversified stores, a phenomenon which occurred

in all major Western industrialized economies at this time.

The emergence of a distinct retail district began with the prosperous years during and after the Civil War, when shops began a steady movement westward, occupying and eventually replacing the residential structures that had been erected during the first half of the century. The earliest of these include the Burgess Building (1870) at 230 Westminster Street; the Dorrance and Gaspee Buildings (1876), the home of J.B. Barnaby's haberdashery and later Kennedy's, at the southwest corner of Westminster and Dorrance Streets; Slade's Building (1880), 50 Washington Street; and a group of smaller buildings erected in the early 1870s on the north side of Westminster Street between Mathewson and Moulton Streets.



Fig. 44: Dorrance and Gaspee Buildings (1876, 1891); 180-204 and 206-208 Westminster Street; Geo. Waterman Cady, architect; photograph, ca 1890, the year before the fire that gutted the Dorrance Building, which was subsequently rebuilt.



Fig. 45: Slade's Building (1881); 50 Washington Street. Painted gray for many years, this building has recently been cleaned to reveal its rich, polychromed exterior, and the corner tower has been painted in a lively scheme.



Fig. 46: Callender, McAuslan & Troup (1873); 239 Westminster Street; William R. Walker, architect, engraving, ca 1880, showing the original cast-iron facade, replaced in 1892 with the present stone work.

By the 1880s the area west of Dorrance Street between Washington and Weybosset Streets was well established as a retail district. Conveniently adjacent to the financial district, it was further aided by the growing mass-transit system, which allowed shoppers to reach it easily on new streetcar lines. These stores represented a new distinction between wholesale and retail trade, a change in the distribution mode which is largely a product of nineteenth-century specialization of merchandizing.

The department store, of which Providence had three by 1900, in particular represents an economy of scale and mass marketing that was both made possible by and necessary for the increasingly complex economy. The first, Callendar, McAuslan and Troop's "Boston Store" opened in the early 1870s at the corner of Westminster and Union Streets. The success of Providence's first department store led not only to its substantial expansion by 1892, but also to the organization of competing firms, Shepard's and the Outlet.



Fig. 47: Shepard's (1880 et seq.); 259 Westminster Street; Washington Street elevation.

The Shepard Company was founded in 1880 in a small building on Westminster Street between Union and Clemence Streets. Shepard's soon achieved great popularity with the buying public, and expanded by construction and acquisition to occupy the whole block bounded by Westminster, Clemence, Washington, and Union Streets. Shepard's prided itself on the diversity of its offerings, and, in fact, organized its numerous departments as more or less autonomous shops within the store.



Fig. 48: Outlet Company (1892 et seq.); 168-176 Weybosset Street.

A third competitor in the department-store field opened on Weybosset Street in the Hodges Building in 1891. Like the Boston Store and Shepard's, the Outlet Company rapidly expanded to occupy an entire city block and absorbed the Hodges Block in expanding. Like Shepard's, the Outlet Company has been a full-service department store, stocking furniture, housewares, clothing, books, cosmetics, and comestibles. The two stores remained in one-to-one competition until

the demise of Shepard's in 1974. This competition resulted not only in commercial vigor for Providence retailing, but also, as the two stores moved into other spheres of activity, in the growth of communications when both began to operate radio stations in the early 1920s.

The success of Shepard's, the Boston Store, and the Outlet helped secure Providence's role as a regional



Fig. 49: The Burrill Building (1891); 291 Westminster Street; Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architect.

commercial center and no doubt encouraged other retail enterprises to move to middle Westminster Street and nearby Weybosset Street. Gladding's, the well established women's-wear firm, moved into the Burrill Building at 291 Westminster Street upon its completion in 1891. Tilden-Thurber, purveyors of jewelry and silverware, moved from lower Westminster Street in 1895 to an elaborate new headquarters at 292 Westminster Street, in the heart of the growing retail district.

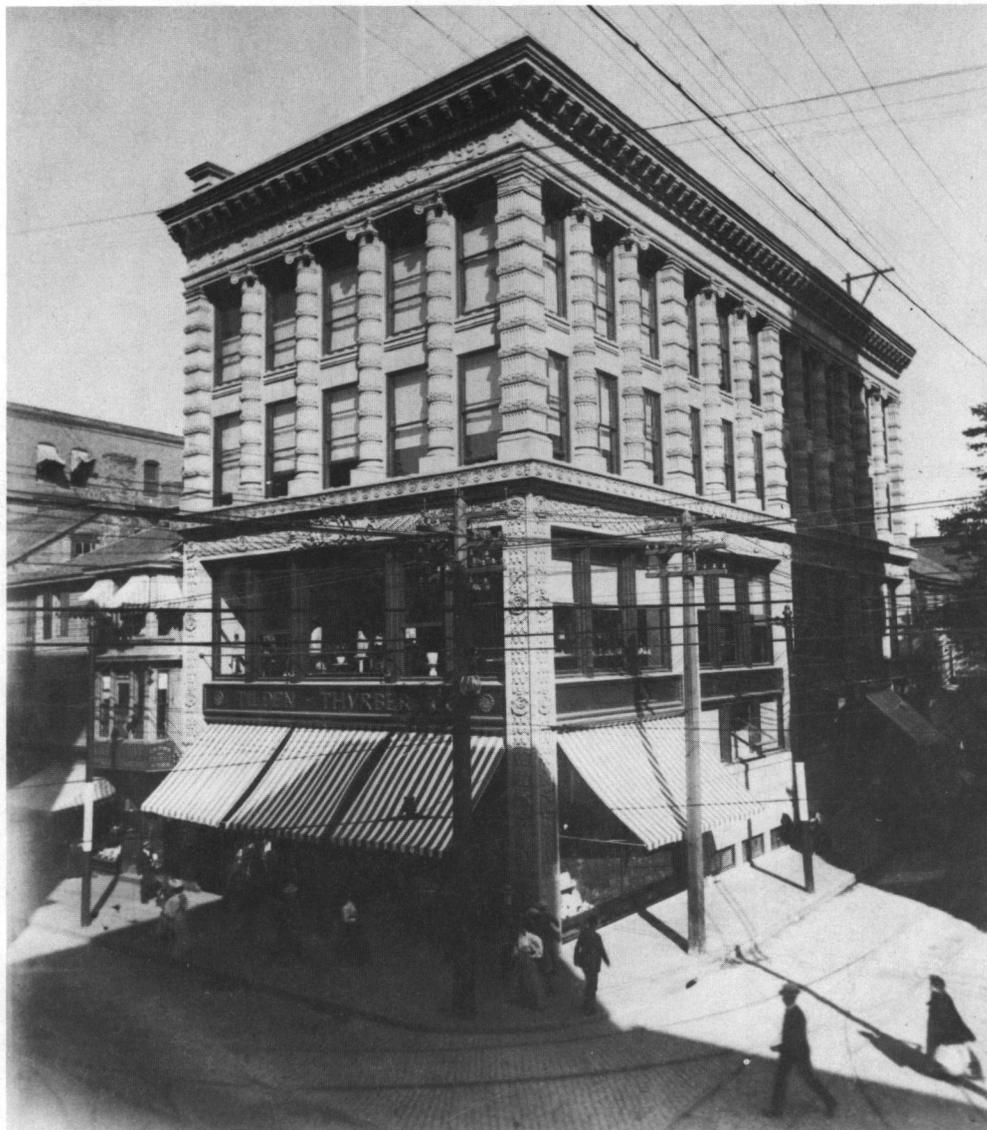


Fig. 50: Tilden-Thurber (1895); 292 Westminster Street; Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge, architect.

The growth of department stores and large specialty stores did not immediately replace the individual craftsman or one-man store. In fact, a number of commercial structures erected in the retail area around the turn-of-the-century were built specifically to house these small operations, which must have benefitted from proximity to other retail enterprises. Both the Alice Building (1898) at 236 Westminster

Street and the Mason Building (ca 1910) at 165 Weybosset Street originally featured shopping arcades on the upper floors, each small shop having a storefront on the corridor. Tailors, milliners, seamstresses, and dressmakers occupied these shops, as well as quarters in more conventional commercial structures, such as the Kinsley Building (1912), the William H. Low Building (1894), or the Caesar Misch Building (1903).



Fig. 51: Caesar Misch Building (1903); 400 Westminster Street; Martin and Hall, architect.

By the 1920s, a shopper in Downtown Providence had a wide range of choices. Expensive hand-made clothes, numerous patterns of flatware, and a wide variety of furniture were all as available as the cheap, mass-produced notions at one of the new five-and-ten-cent stores (like Kresge's or Woolworth's) that became common here and throughout the country in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

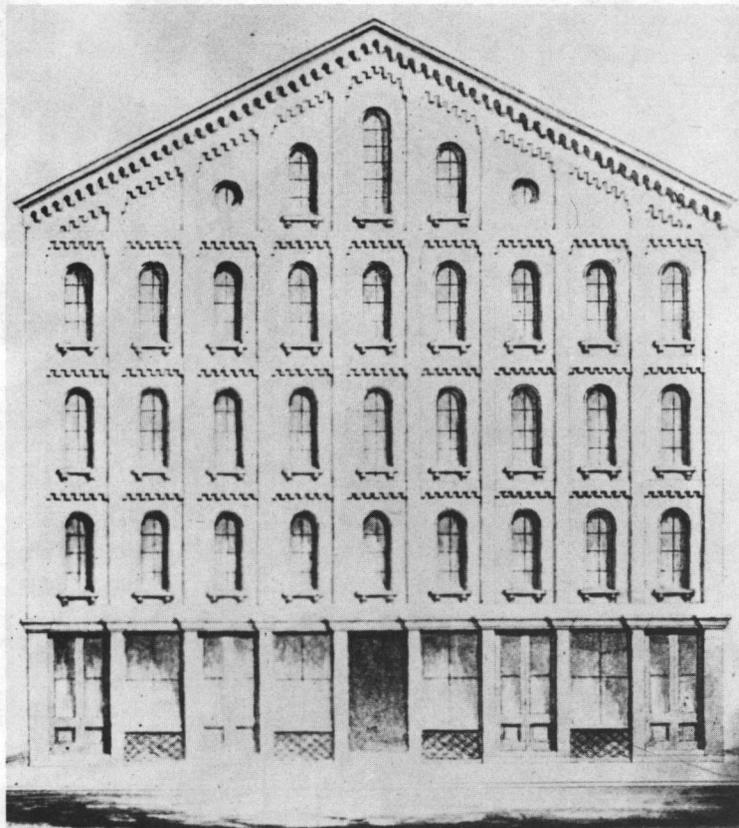


Fig. 52: Howard Building I (1847; destroyed, 1853); Westminster at Dorrance Street; Thomas Tefft, architect; architect's rendering.



Fig. 53: Howard Building II (1856; destroyed, 1858); Westminster at Dorrance Street; Thomas Tefft, architect; architect's rendering.



Fig. 54: Howard Building III (1859; demolished, 1956); Westminster at Dorrance Street; James C. Bucklin, architect; photograph, ca 1870.

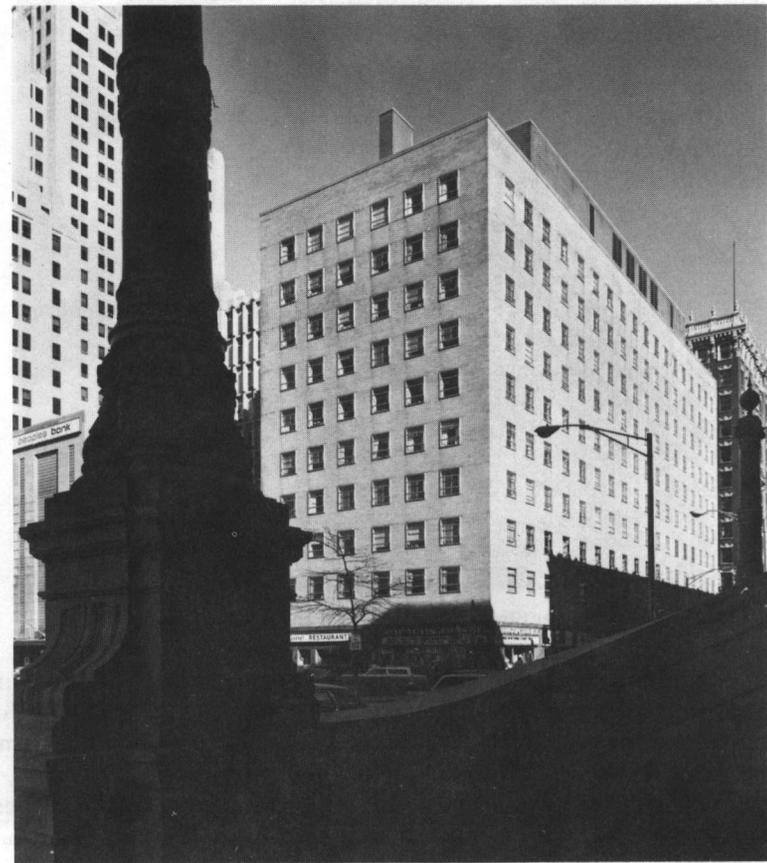


Fig. 55: Howard Building IV (1957-1959; 1968); 10 Dorrance Street; Albert Harkness and Peter Geddes, architects; Robinson Green Beretta, architect for addition.

## Civic Center

More than just a market place, a downtown is a cultural center. Since its settlement in the eighteenth century, Downtown has provided places for the exchange of ideas — churches, theatres, assembly halls, educational institutions — and for business enterprises that support the exchange process — restaurants, hotels. The concentration of such activity in one area occurred simultaneously with the development of the central business district.

Theatrical performances were banned in the state from 1762 until the early 1790s, and soon after the ban was lifted, the Providence Theatre was built at the southwest corner of Westminster and Mathewson Streets, providing entertainment until the building was acquired by Grace Church in 1832.

Several new theatres and halls were constructed Downtown in the mid-nineteenth century. Shakspeare Hall was erected at 128 Dorrance Street in 1838, providing the largest, most modern facilities yet seen in Providence; it closed, however, in 1844 and was gutted by fire in 1846.<sup>1</sup> The following year, Howard Hall, the first of four structures on its site, was constructed at the northeast corner of Dorrance and Westminster Streets. This building accommodated public presentations by celebrities as diverse as Jenny Lind, Sam Houston, Tom Thumb, and Edgar Allen Poe. Howard Hall, rebuilt in 1856 after a major fire in 1853, was augmented by the adjacent Forbes Theatre, which, like the first two Howard Buildings, met a fiery end shortly after its construction.<sup>2</sup> The Case-Mead Building of 1859 at 76 Dorrance Street provided space in its large fourth story for an infantry hall. A major theatre was constructed in 1864 on the City Hall Lot: known as the City Hall Theatre, it was the scene of numerous per-



Fig. 56: Providence Opera House (1871); Dorrance at Pine Street; photograph, ca 1872.

formances until the opening of the Providence Opera House in 1871 at the northwest corner of Dorrance and Pine Streets. The Providence Opera House re-

mained the city's leading legitimate theatre into the 1920s, when the popularity of motion pictures began to eclipse stage performances.

<sup>1</sup>Only the walls remained, and these were incorporated into the present warehouse building now on the site.

<sup>2</sup>The Forbes Theatre was replaced in 1860 by the aptly named Phenix Building, which was replaced by the Howard Building complex in this century.



Fig. 57: Strand Theatre (1916); 85 Washington Street; Thomas J. Hill Pierce, architect; photograph, ca 1919.

Providence, like most other cities around the turn-of-the-century, had a constant flow of vaudeville entertainers through the city. Here, the Cohans, the Foys, and others played to full houses at Keith's Opera House (1877 et seq.) at 260 Westminster Street. Keith's was, after 1900, also the scene of the earliest motion picture shows. Movies were first shown in converted

theatres, but the growing popularity of motion pictures necessitated the construction of new theatres. Several were constructed around Mathewson Street before 1910, and during the following decade larger, grander movie palaces rose in this area: the Union Theatre (1916) on Mathewson Street, the Strand (1916) at 85 Washington Street, and Schubert's Majestic (1917) at 195 Washing-

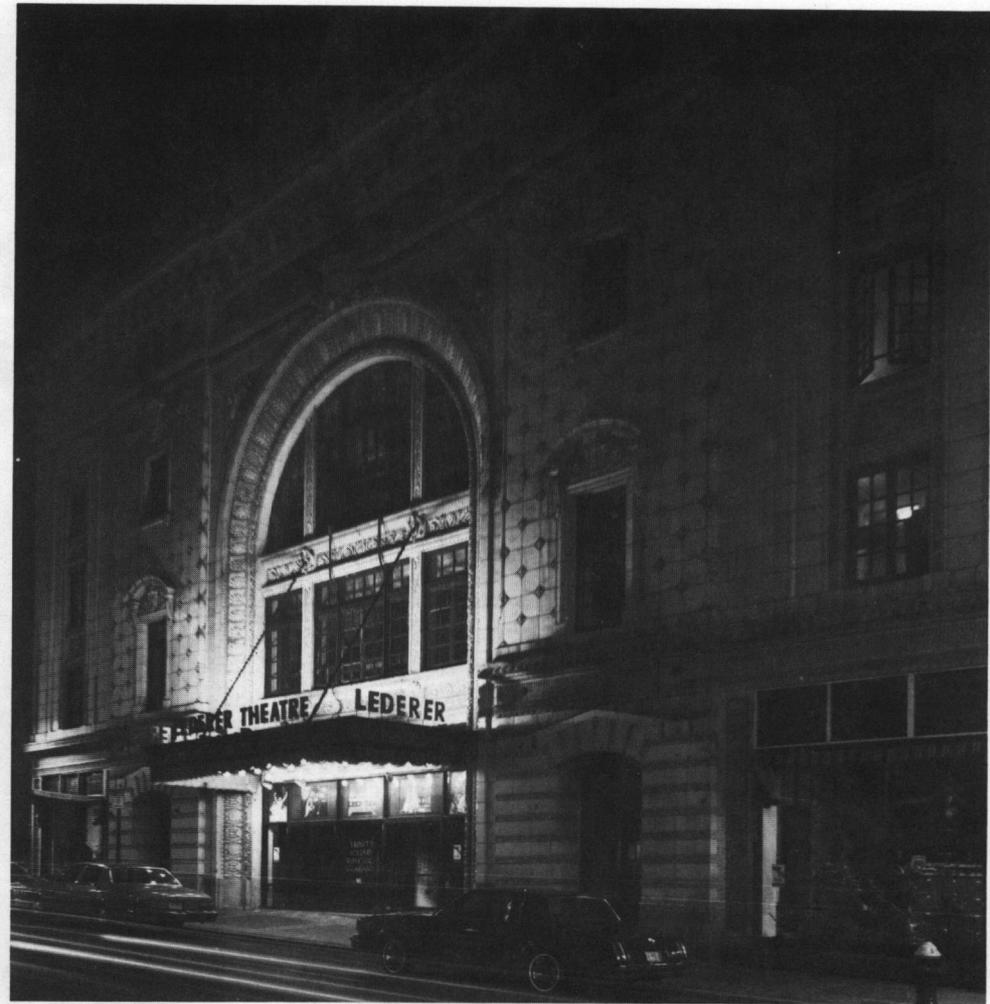


Fig. 58: Majestic Theatre (1917); 197 Washington Street; William R. Walker & Son, architect.

ton Street. These formed the core of Providence's entertainment district along Washington Street. The culmination of this trend toward elaborate shrines to the silver screen came in 1928 with the completion of Loew's State Theatre at 220 Weybosset Street, now Ocean State Performing Arts Center; this extremely elaborate building is the finest expression of its type in



Fig. 59: Loew's State Theatre (1928); 220 Weybosset Street; C. W. & George Rapp, architect.



Fig. 60: Hoppin Homestead Building (1875; demolished, 1979); 375 Westminster Street; James C. Bucklin, architect; engraving, ca 1881.

## New England.

A number of important educational institutions were established Downtown during the nineteenth century. The State Normal School, forerunner of today's Rhode Island College, occupied the Second Universalist Church beginning in 1852. Mowry and

Goff's English and Classical School for Boys opened on Westminster Street in 1864 and later built its own structure on Snow Street. Bryant and Stratton Business College, organized in 1863 with rooms in the Howard Building, occupied specially designed quarters in the Hoppin Homestead Building after 1875. The Hoppin Homestead Building also housed the Rhode Island

School of Design (founded in 1877) from 1878, when the first classes were held, until 1893, when the school moved to its present location. The Providence Public Library, founded in 1875, occupied several Downtown buildings — including Butler Exchange and the English and Classical School — before erecting permanent quarters at Washington and Greene Streets in 1900.



Fig. 61: Masonic Temple (1884; destroyed, 1896); Dorrance at Pine Street; William R. Walker, architect; engraving, ca 1886. This elaborate composition incorporates a number of elements derived from the Queen Anne style contemporarily practiced by Richard Norman Shaw in London.

A number of clubs and fraternal organizations established headquarters Downtown in the nineteenth century. The Masons were active in Providence in the eighteenth century, and added the third story to the Market House in 1797 for meeting space. In 1884, a large, Queen Anne style lodge was erected at the corner of Pine and Dorrance Streets; the structure was destroyed by fire in 1896 and replaced by the present structure the following year. The Young Men's Christian Association was established in quarters on lower

Weybosset Street in 1854; the organization occupied three other buildings Downtown before erecting its own structure at the corner of Jackson and Westminster Streets in 1889, which was replaced in 1912 by the present edifice on Broad Street. A branch of the Young Women's Christian Association, established in Providence in 1867, likewise occupied a series of structures before completion of its headquarters at 254 Washington Street in 1906.

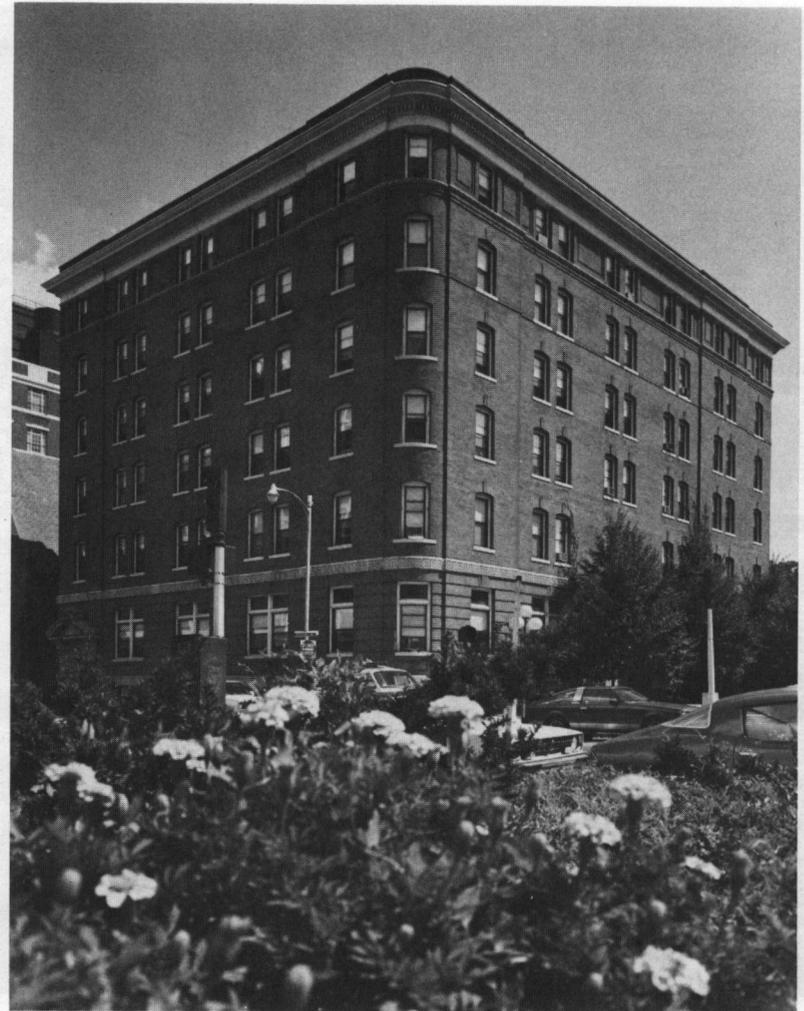


Fig. 62: Young Women's Christian Association Building (1906); 254 Washington Street; Howard Hoppin, architect.

Hotels, like theatres, had existed Downtown throughout the nineteenth century, and, like theatres, they became transformed into a grander expression of the American spirit in architecture during the early years of the twentieth century. The earliest hotel Downtown was the City Hotel, established on Weybosset Street in 1832. It remained in this location until demolished in the 1890s to make room for the expanding Outlet Company. The first major hotel in Providence was the 250-room Narragansett Hotel built

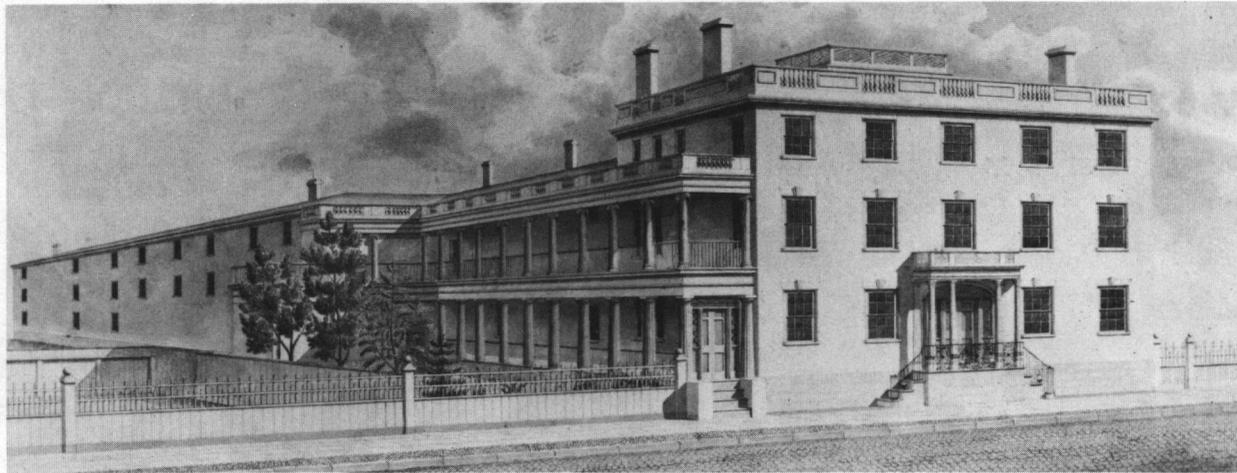


Fig. 63: City Hotel (1832; demolished, 1903); Weybosset Street; Russell Warren, architect; architect's rendering.

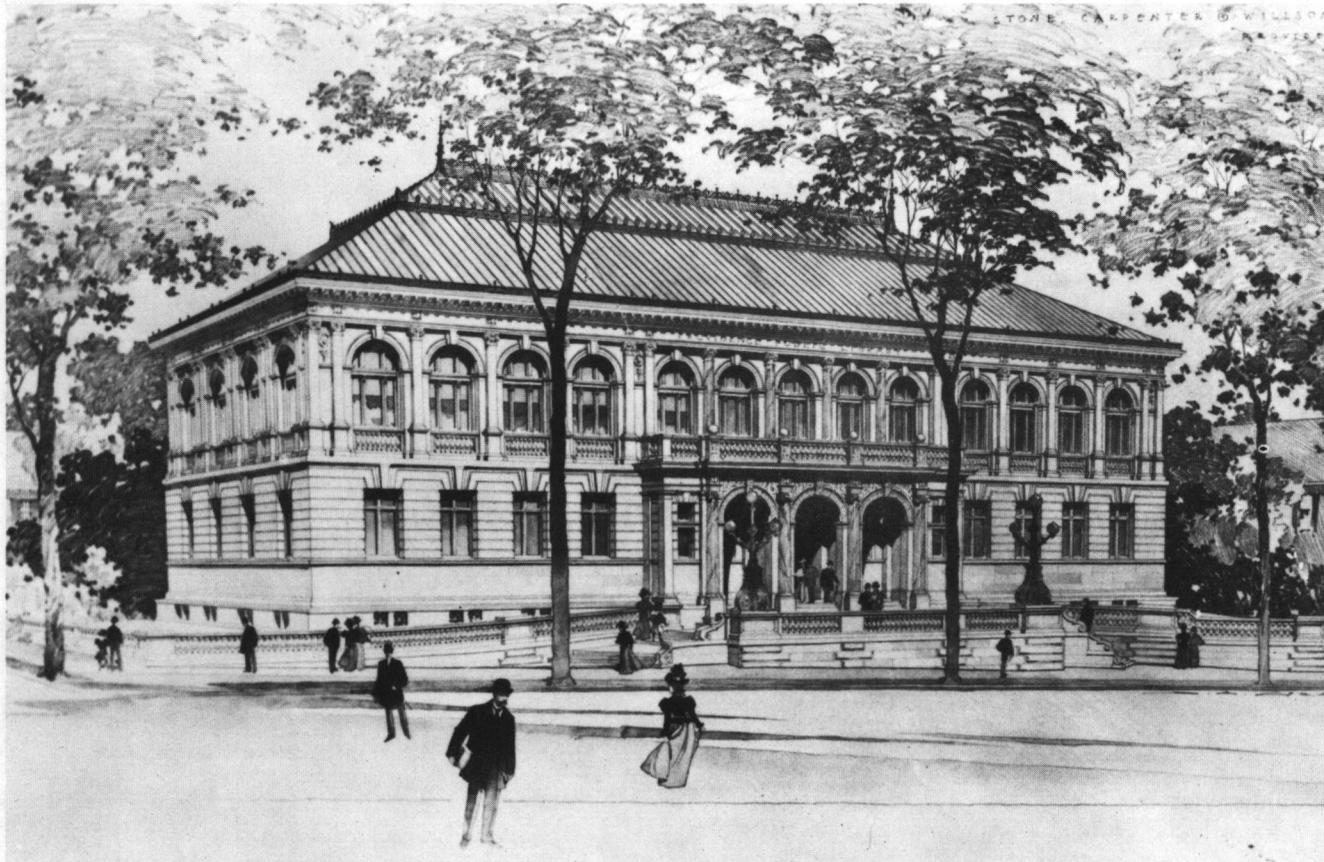


Fig. 64: Providence Public Library (1900); 150 Empire Street; Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architect. Architect's rendering of original building at Washington and Greene Streets.



Fig. 65: Narragansett Hotel (1879); Dorrance at Weybosset Street; William R. Walker, architect. The Providence Opera House is visible at left.

in 1878 at the southwest corner of Weybosset and Dorrance Streets. It was joined in 1880 by the smaller Hotel Dorrance, at the northwest corner of Westminster and Dorrance Streets. Around 1890, the modest Hotel Dreyfus was built at 119 Washington Street; it was thoroughly remodeled in 1917. Around 1900, two more hotels were added: the Abbott Park Hotel at 269 Weybosset Street and the Crown Hotel at 200 Weybosset Street. The small but elegant Blackstone Hotel of 1911 at 317 Westminster Street did little to increase the city's stock of modern hotel accommodations, and by 1915 the Chamber of Commerce began to discuss sponsoring a major modern hotel for Downtown. The culmination of the Chamber's activities was the Biltmore Hotel, completed in 1922 at the northwest corner of Dorrance and Washington Streets. Since its completion, it has been a focus of social activity Downtown.

## *Perspective of the proposed* PROVIDENCE BILTMORE HOTEL

*As designed by*  
Warren and Wetmore  
*Architects*



Fig. 66: Biltmore Hotel (1922); 11 Dorrance Street; Warren and Wetmore, architect. Architect's rendering for the prospectus used to raise funds for the hotel by the Chamber of Commerce.

Fig. 67: Biltmore Hotel (1922); 11 Dorrance Street; Warren and Wetmore, architect; photograph by John R. Hess, ca 1927. View of the roof garden, established by manager L. D. Wallick in the 1920s, which provided the hotel with fresh flowers, vegetables, ducks, chickens, and eggs.





Fig. 68: Biltmore Hotel (1922, 1979); 11 Dorrance Street; Warren and Wetmore, architect; Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson and Abbott, architects for rehabilitation.

## THE POST-INDUSTRIAL CITY: 1929-PRESENT

In spite of the continued building activity in Providence during the 1920s, Rhode Island's long years of growth were reaching an end. The New England textile industry never fully recovered from the slump after World War I, worsening labor relations began to erode the state's industrial base, and a number of mills left the state — often to southern states, nearer the source of raw materials, which could provide a cheaper labor market. The Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the ensuing Great Depression produced long-term crippling effects on Rhode Island's economy. Providence not only suffered its own local difficulties, but as the financial and commercial focus of a wide region it bore the sub-

sidary effects of the Depression in the rest of the state as well. This decline in industry, trade, borrowing, mortgaging, insurance, travel, and commerce was by far the major economic calamity of Providence's history.

The Great Depression virtually halted new development Downtown, and between the Crash and the end of World War II, only three major building projects were undertaken. Two of these, the Post Office and the Fire and Police Station, were public projects aided by the infusion of federal dollars.

The postwar prosperity of the late 1940s was short lived in Rhode Island, as the weakened industrial

base began to erode further without the government contracts that had temporarily saved a number of mills. Only two buildings of note were constructed: the simple, modernistic People's Bank (1948) at 70 Exchange Place and W. T. Grant's Department Store (1949) at 260 Westminster Street.

Although few new buildings were erected in the 1950s, the period is of crucial importance to the Downtown fabric. Postwar concepts of urban renewal addressed the urban center as an outmoded, decayed area in need of rapid modernization, to be achieved by sweeping away blocks of buildings and replacing them with clean, new structures similar to those already rising in suburban areas.



Fig. 69: United States Post Office Annex, now John O. Pastore Building (1938-1940); 3 Exchange Terrace; Jackson, Robertson and Adams, architect.



Fig. 70: Providence Journal Building (1934, 1948); 35-69 Fountain Street; Albert Kahn, architect.



Fig. 71: People's Bank Building (1949); 70 Kennedy Plaza; Cram and Ferguson, architect.



Fig. 72: Aerial view of Downtown Providence (1975). Showing the circumscription of the central business district by highways and the railroad tracks; the Weybosset Hill Redevelopment Project Area is in the foreground.



Fig. 73: *Downtown Providence 1970*; the master plan adopted by the city in 1959. This view shows the proposed redevelopment of the Kennedy Plaza area, which included the removal of the railroad tracks to the north and the demolition of City Hall, Union Station, and the Custom House.

Planning activity in the 1950s culminated in the Downtown Master Plan of 1959, prepared by the City Plan Commission. This long-range set of guidelines for future development called for the virtual rebuilding of the central business district and represented an effort to bolster the economic vitality of Downtown and preserve the city's self-image of progress and modernity. The boom years in Providence, however, had passed, and — fortunately for the architectural fabric of the area — these plans went largely unrealized. The Master Plan no doubt encouraged remodeling and demolition

of older buildings, but its major effect was realized in the Weybosset Hill Redevelopment Project.

Remodeling in the 1950s was carried out with increasingly lessened sensibilities to the original architectural integrity of existing structures. Postwar perceptions of the central business district by civic and business leaders focused on a strong desire for modernity, and, lacking the financial means to create a sleek, up-to-date downtown, property owners and planners were content to alter the existing building stock by adding storefronts of assertively modern

materials or — more extreme — resheathing an entire building to simulate the box-like structures then in vogue. Notable examples of this modernization effort include the reduction of the five-story Tillinghast Building at 299 Westminster Street to the present two-story box and the siding of the former Providence *Journal* Building at 209 Westminster Street with porcelain-enamel panels which completely obscure the building's elaborate wall articulation.

Demolition was responsible for the depletion of the coherent downtown building stock. Buildings were

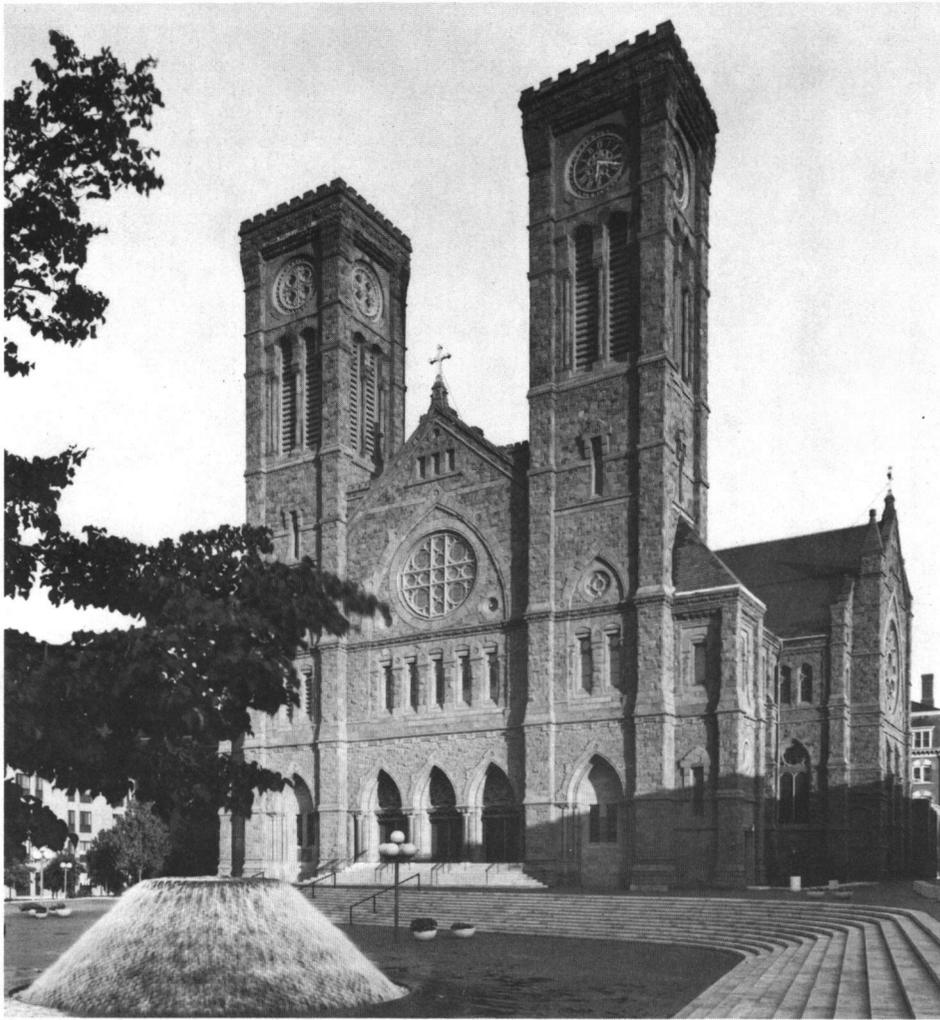


Fig. 74: Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul (1878); Cathedral Square; Patrick C. Keeley, architect. The square achieves a visual simulation of European plazas, but its relative isolation diminishes its potential for the activity common to continental examples.

razed simply because they were old, with antiquated service systems. They were often demolished with little or no plan for replacement structures or uses, save that of increased parking space for the daily influx of automobiles. Thus, the Narragansett Hotel at the corner of Dorrance and Weybosset met its end, as did a number of industrial buildings south of the Arcade on Weybosset Street.

Concurrent with urban renewal schemes for the central business district, plans were underway for a freeway system for Providence which included a north-

south link (part of the interstate highway system, now Interstate Highway 95), a link to the suburbs east of the city (now Interstate Highway 195), and a western route (Route 10, which has not been completed). While these roads were perceived, in part, as facilitating the daily flow of traffic into the Downtown, they greatly abetted the flight to the suburbs of both Providence residents and — even more important for the commercial vitality of downtown — retail businesses.

The Weybosset Hill Redevelopment Project focused on the area west of Empire Street, which represented



Fig. 75: Beneficent House (1967); 1 Chestnut Street; Paul Rudolph architect.

the most heavily blighted part of Downtown, with the fewest number of historically or architecturally important structures. Though visually distinct from the rest of Downtown, this project did achieve its goal of renewing a decayed part of the city, providing new housing, office, and activity space. Perhaps the best of these buildings is Paul Rudolph's Beneficent House (1967) at Chestnut and Broad Streets; built as housing for the elderly, this lively Brutalist building of brick and structural concrete is a handsome addition to the renewal area. The Civic Center, a large,



Fig. 76: Civic Center (1972); 1 LaSalle Square; Ellerbee Associates, architect.

hip-roof, polygonal building, has provided Providence with a regionally important facility, drawing large crowds for exhibitions, concerts, and sporting events.

While a plan for the creation of a pedestrian walkway along Westminster Street had been suggested as early as 1907, the idea was never seriously considered.

Discussion of the present Westminster Mall began in the late 1950s, and the project came to fruition only after a great deal of disagreement over its form. The Westminster Mall opened in 1965; landscaped with benches and planting pockets, it attempted to bring suburban-shopping-mall modernity to what was perceived as an outmoded shopping area. The project, however, met little success: it limited vehicular access

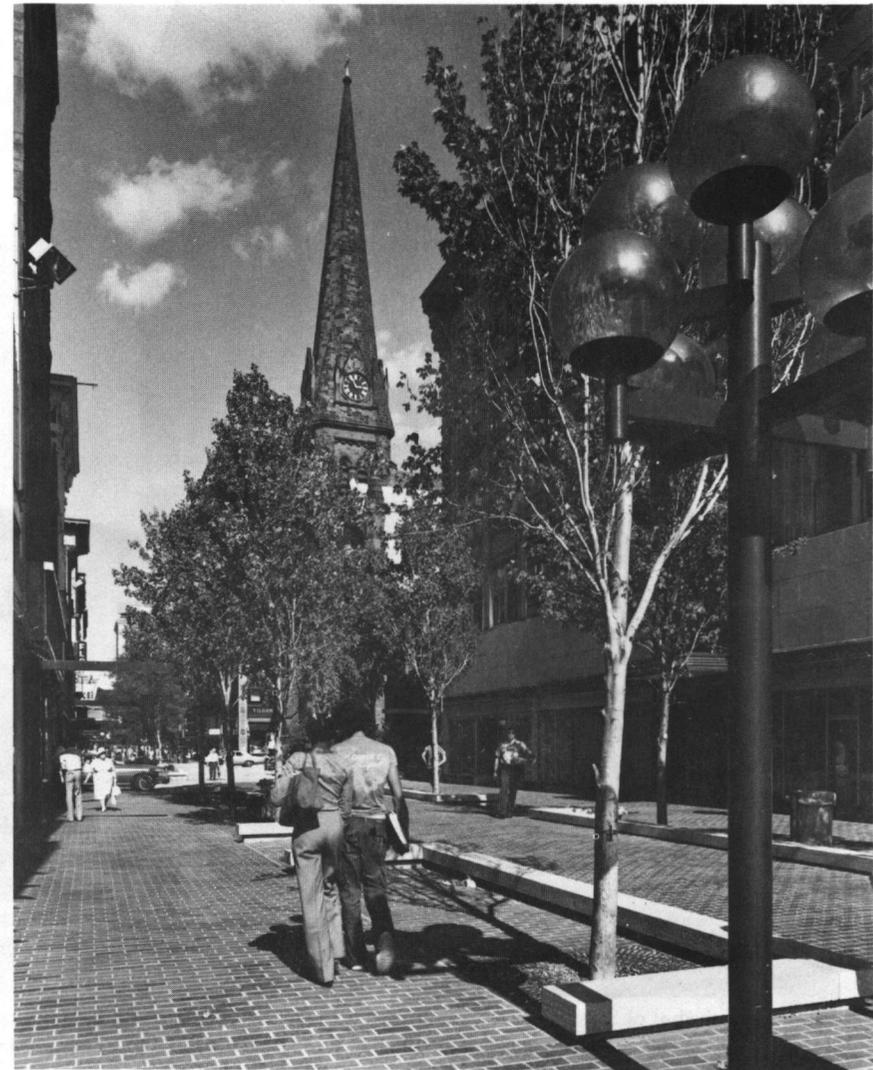


Fig. 77: Westminster Mall (1979); Malcolm Grear Designers, architect.

to the city's major shopping street but offered no additional amenities to entice shoppers Downtown. In spite of this urban renewal effort, public perception of Downtown continued to decline, and the increasing unwillingness of patrons to battle Downtown traffic, the lure of the suburban shopping malls, and the closing of several major Downtown stores were both symptoms and causes of this decline.

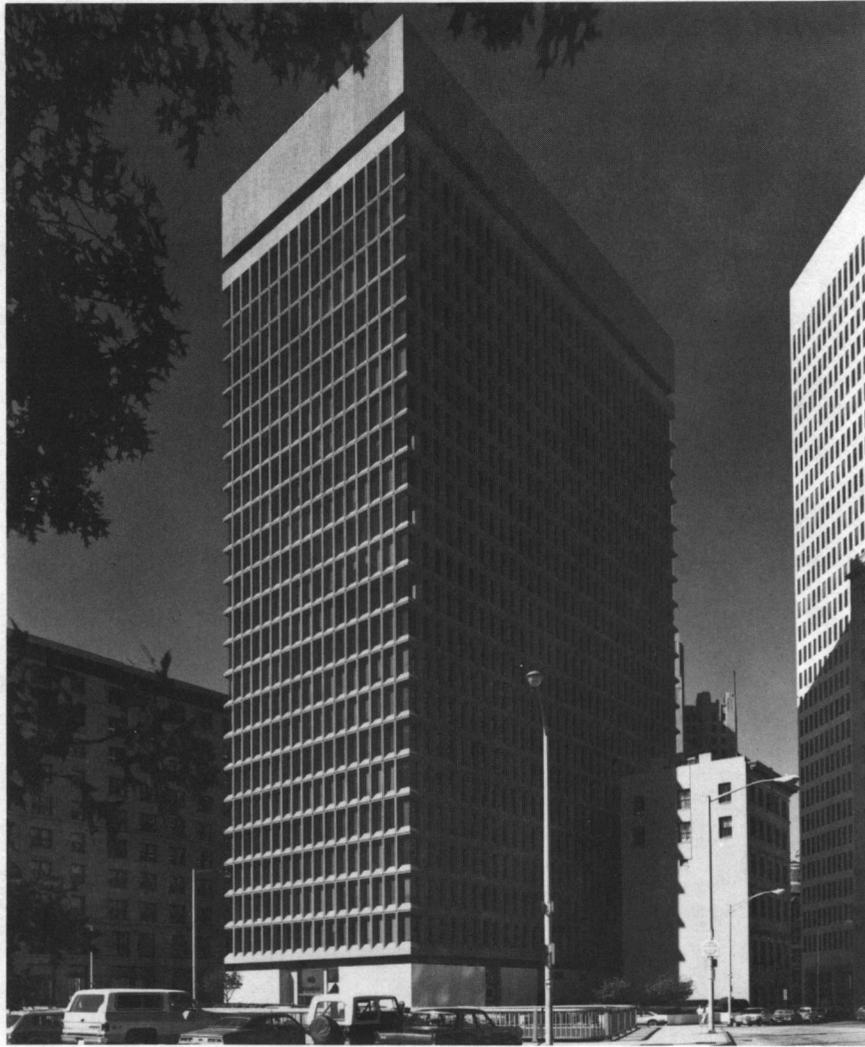


Fig. 78: 40 Westminster Street (1969); Shreve, Lamb and Harmon Associates, architect.

Decline in Downtown Providence as a retail center led to an implicit decision that the area could only be maintained economically as an office-financial center. Several large office buildings were erected in the financial district beginning in the late 1950s, and while this activity indicated a confidence in the Downtown's future, the buildings tended to drain other older buildings of tenants who wanted more modern quarters.

The new Howard Building (1959, enlarged 1968) was the first major construction project in Downtown Providence since the 1920s. The Old Stone Tower at 40 Westminster Street (1969), the first major tower, is a twenty-three-story, reinforced-concrete structure which dominates the surrounding nineteenth-century structures. The Hospital Trust Tower at the corner of Westminster and Exchange Streets (1973), a twenty-



Fig. 79: Hospital Trust Tower (1973); 1 Hospital Trust Plaza; John Carl Warnecke and Associates, architect. Soldiers and Sailors Monument in foreground.

eight-story, steel-frame, glass-and-travertine, curtain-wall structure, furthered this trend of new construction as a means of maintaining the commercial vitality of Downtown Providence.

The general decline of Downtown Providence as a retail center and the construction of new office buildings left a number of fully and partially vacant build-

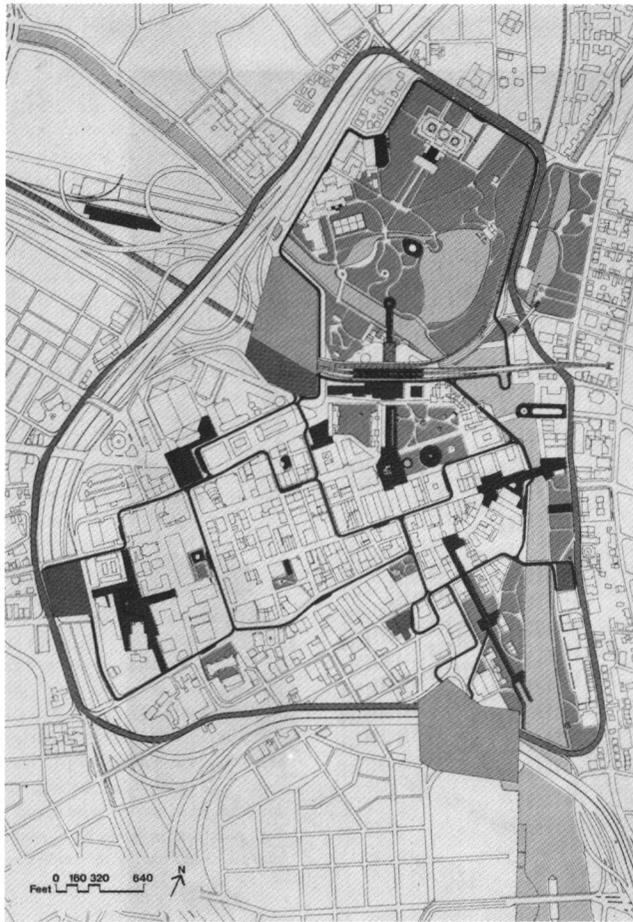


Fig. 80A: *Interface: Providence* (1974); Interface: Providence Group of the Rhode Island School of Design. Map of the project area.

ings. The closing of such long-time downtown institutions as Shepard's and the Biltmore reflected the deterioration of the retail economy, and seemed to portend future decay. In recent years, however, concern over the future of Downtown Providence has brought the area into focus as one with potential for rehabilitation.

Renewed interest in Downtown Providence has come from several sources. The *Interface: Providence* report of 1974 first brought attention to the potential of the area. This transportation study, sponsored by the Rhode Island School of Design and supported by



Fig. 80B: *Interface: Providence* (1974); Interface: Providence Group of the Rhode Island School of Design. View of upper Weybosset Street.

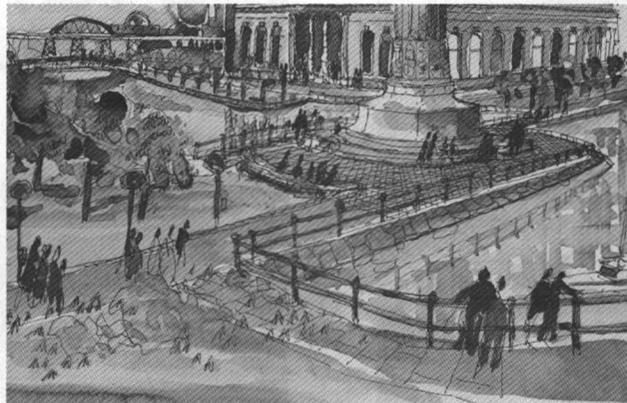


Fig. 80C: *Interface: Providence* (1974); Interface: Providence Group of the Rhode Island School of Design. View of Memorial Square.

local businesses and the National Endowment for the Humanities, focused on the compactness of the Downtown, and presented a comprehensive proposal for the improvement of transportation facilities. The thinking behind this report has been especially important in plans for the rehabilitation of Union Station and Kennedy Plaza. The business community further has lent support to redevelopment of the Downtown. The commitment of a local consortium to the renovation of the Biltmore has financially reinforced redevelopment of the area. The Ocean State Theatre (formerly Loew's State) was saved from threatened demolition through the commitment of Downtown businessmen, the Provi-

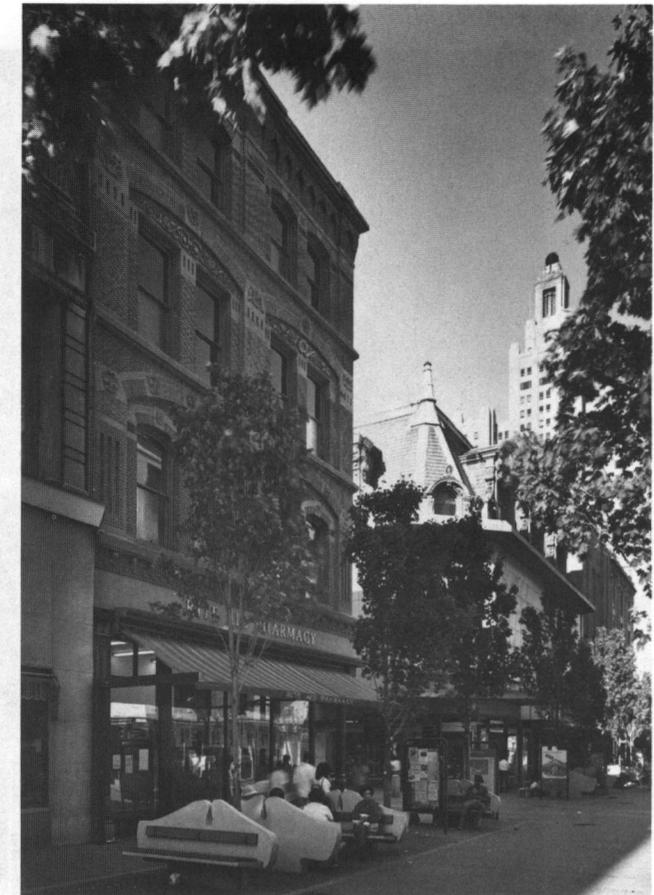


Fig. 81: Hannah Greene Estate Building (1879); 217 Westminster Street. This sensible rehabilitation completed in the building's centennial year includes a return to the original polychrome exterior and a new storefront sympathetic to the building.

dence Foundation, the City of Providence and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission. Johnson and Wales Business College has acquired a number of buildings Downtown and adapted them for classrooms, dormitories, and retail laboratories. Community awareness of the history and potential of the Downtown, stimulated by the *Interface* study, has been raised through efforts of the Providence Preservation Society. The Mayor's Office of Community Development has worked with downtown property owners to rehabilitate and restore some of the existing building stock; storefronts for the Lauderdale Building on Westminster Street, Colorlab on Peck Street, and Rite-Aid on West-



Fig. 82: The Arcade (1828); 130 Westminster Street; Russell Warren and James Bucklin, architects, rehabilitation work (1980) by Gilbane Construction Company, Irving B. Haynes and Associates, architect.

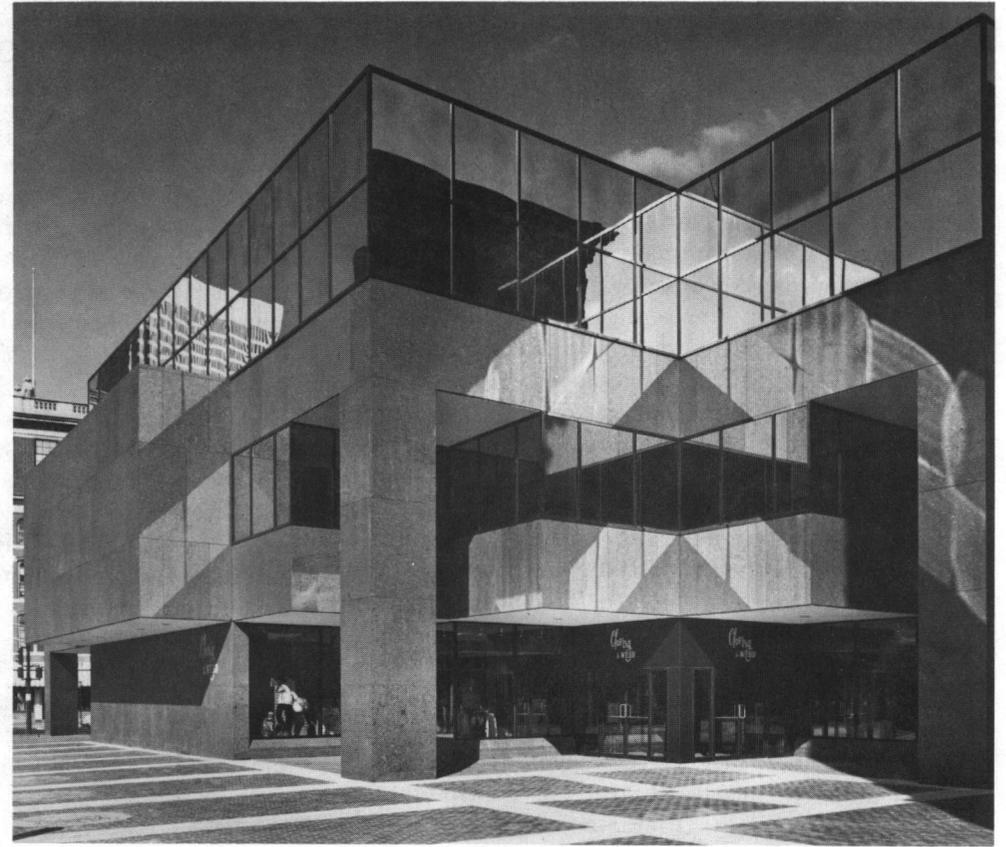


Fig. 83: Broadcast House (1979); 122 Dorrance Street; Providence Partnership, architect.

minster Mall have been effected through the Community Development Office.

Current civic projects focus on the rehabilitation of Downtown. A multiple-phase, long-range project for the improvement of streetscapes and amelioration of commercial and retail conditions began in the spring of 1977. Its first phase included the regulation of the width of Weybosset Street and the creation of a wide pedestrian mall along its northern side between Mathewson and Dorrance Streets. The second and third phases have provided a similar treatment for Washington Street and Westminster Mall. A major current plan

includes the creation of an automobile restricted zone in the Kennedy Plaza-City Hall Park area. Unlike previous long-range plans for Downtown, these projects are designed to account for what exists Downtown and thus represent a philosophical shift in the approach to the central business district from the replacement philosophy of urban renewal to a greater concern for preservation.

Public investment through grants and loans has encouraged a considerable increase in the interest in and commitment to historic preservation among Downtown property owners. The rehabilitations of

the Strand Theatre, the Richmond Building, the Earle Building, Slade's Building, Hall's Block, the Hay Building, and the Owen Block — among others — represent a growing awareness of the visual appeal and financial utility of older commercial properties. This rehabilitation activity represents an attitude toward the central business district far removed from the drastic urban renewal programs of the 1950s and 1960s. Only through such concern and financial support by property owners themselves can the historically and architecturally significant portions of Downtown's heritage be maintained for future generations.

### III. SUMMARY

In its growth from an agricultural adjunct of a self-sufficient colony through its years as an economic and transportation center for an industrializing region to its post-industrial decline, Downtown Providence has retained a legacy from each period. Abbott Park and Beneficent Congregational Church recall the earliest settlement of the Weybosset Side, in the 1740s. Late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century growth gave the area its street system south and west of Kennedy Plaza, as well as a handful of commercial, residential, and religious structures. The greatest transformation came, not surprisingly, during Providence's century of industrial and economic hegemony, when the topography of Downtown's northeast corner was radically altered, transportation links were formed, major institutions were established, and the majority of existing Downtown buildings were erected. That so much from these years remains is largely due to the city's relative poverty following the industrial decline of the 1920s and the Great Depression, else the dynamic process inherent in any prospering central business district would have brought new development, replacing the predominantly late nineteenth- early twentieth-century Downtown that remains. Major activity since World War II has focused on the western end of Downtown, away from the dense commercial core, with the Weybosset Hill Redevelopment Project and the construction of the interstate highways; the most substantial postwar changes to Downtown's once denser commercial fabric have been the random demolition of older buildings to provide surface parking for automobiles and the construction of two new office towers at Turk's Head. Now, however, a number of projects are planned both for revitalizing existing structures and for filling the existing gaps. This trend should add to the vitality of the Downtown.

### IV. ASSESSMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Few cities are so fortunate as Providence in having a coherent Downtown recalling critical phases of its history combined with the historical perspective to appreciate this gift from the past and to integrate it into current and future development. By capitalizing on this rich bequest, Providence can both improve its economic well-being and ensure the urbane quality of Downtown.

The central business district of a regional center and a state capital is, to a degree, an indicator not only of its history and economic wealth but also of its self-esteem. Downtown Providence was built with a sense of pride, particularly during its century of growth, and the buildings and monuments erected there are as worthy of our pride as of that of their patrons, designers, and builders.

The awareness of our built heritage and our pride in it should guide our decisions in directing the growth and change of Downtown. A successful central business

district is constantly dynamic, and the demands of the marketplace cannot be completely ignored Downtown without losing the dynamism which is so much a part of what a center city is: there would be no "there" there. Development Downtown must be based on the premise of managed growth and change to maintain an equilibrium of economic health and preservation of the best of our past.

Managed growth and change must depend primarily on a planning approach to Downtown taken as a whole, not on *ad hoc* decision making. The balance between the static, master-plan approach — such as the city's 1959 Master Plan or *Interface: Providence* — and the immediate, scattered-shot approach lies in a well-conceived overall developmental plan for Downtown that provides general guidelines and flexible approaches — directing growth and change, not codifying it. A Downtown development plan should ensure the city's economic vitality, meet the demands of Downtown constituencies, and provide a mechanism for saving the best of what we have and encouraging the highest quality of new development.

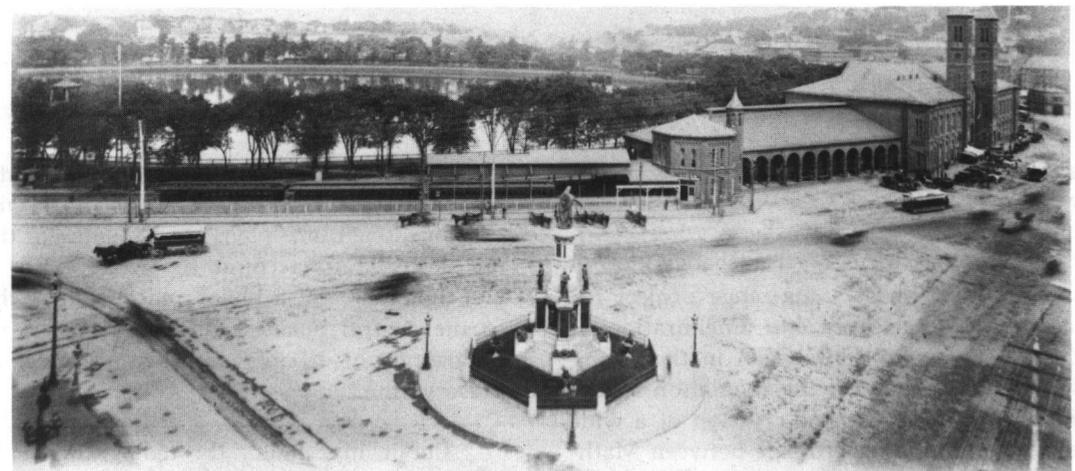


Fig. 84: Union Station (1848); Exchange Place; Thomas Telft, architect; photograph from City Hall, ca 1880. The elliptical Cove Basin lies immediately behind.



Fig. 85: Downtown Providence from the southeast.

## V. INVENTORY

The following inventory is a comprehensive list of historic resources in Downtown Providence. It includes an entry for each building within the survey area, as well as entries for major streets, parks, open spaces, and monuments.

Entries for streets, parks, and open spaces provide historical background, giving the dates of establishment and major changes as well as the source of the name.

For buildings, each entry provides a description of the structure, noting (when known) dates and extent of major alterations; a brief history of the building; and an evaluation of the building within the broader historical and architectural context of Downtown. Names are generally assigned to buildings on the basis of original builder, original owner, or longevity of use. In some cases, where original use was short lived or remains obscure, the name of the present tenant or owner has been assigned or the building is referred to simply as *commercial block*. More extensive research may indicate that another name would be more appropriate. Unless otherwise noted, all buildings have flat roofs.

Entries are arranged alphabetically by street and then in numerical order by street number. Entries having no street number have been included in their normal sequence. Properties marked with an asterisk are listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

## ABBOTT PARK PLACE

**Abbott Park (1746, 1873, 1927):** A small, well planted park with a large, elaborate, cast-iron fountain at its center. Given to Providence as a square for the adjacent Beneficent Congregational Church by Daniel Abbott, Abbott Park is the oldest park in Providence and has remained in constant use since its donation. Once a simple grassy knoll extending east from Beneficent Congregational Church, the park was embellished with the fountain and a cast-iron fence (now removed) in 1873; the street on the park's west side was cut in 1927. The park was re-landscaped in the 1970s. It is the most visible reminder of the early settlement of what is now Downtown Providence.

- 8 **Plantations Club, Johnson and Wales College (1926-1927):** Andrews, Jones, Briscoe and Whitmore, architects; Georgian Revival; 4½-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with mansard roof; interiors are now somewhat altered, but the original lounge retains mid-18th-century paneling salvaged from a house on nearby Pine Street. The Plantations Club was established in 1916 and met at 77 Franklin Street until this structure was erected. Following the demise of this popular women's club in the 1960s, the building was purchased by Johnson and Wales College, which has centered its activities in this part of Downtown Providence. Overlooking Abbott Park, the Plantations Club handsomely complements both Beneficent Congregational Church and the park itself.

## ABORN STREET

- 18-20 **Koerner's Lunch (ca 1928):** 1-story brick structure with unaltered storefront. This small structure is related to the other 1- and 2-story buildings constructed in the vicinity of Empire Street beginning around 1915. It exemplifies a once prevalent type of restaurant, the lunchroom — the urban business-district counterpart of the diner. Koerner's Lunch contributes a bit of earthy variety to Downtown.
- 31-37 **Commercial Building (ca 1900):** 1-story, brick-sheathed building with mid-20th-century aluminum-and-plate-glass storefronts. Originally three stories, this building has lost its upper floors. It was once a typical turn-of-the-century commercial structure with stores at street level and offices above.

## ATWELLS AVENUE

- 21 **Holiday Inn (1970):** Allen O'Hara, Incorporated, architect. 13-story, reinforced-concrete structure with pier-and-spandrel articulation of northeast and southwest elevations, blank northwest and southeast elevations, and a portecochere entrance. The first hotel erected in Providence after the Biltmore's opening in 1922, the Holiday Inn provided modern accommodations in contrast to the increasingly

shabby quarters of the Biltmore in the early 1970s. With the decline and closing of the Biltmore and other Downtown hotels, the Holiday Inn, with the Marriot Inn at Randall Square, monopolized the market for tourists, traveling salesmen, and convention-goers during the 1970s. Sited near the exit ramp of Route I-95 and eminently visible to high-speed automobiles traveling the highway, the 275-room Holiday Inn, with its nationally-known neon logo atop this monolithic structure, beckons the weary motorist. It typifies the bland statements made by architectural firms designing for national franchises which depend more on recognizable conformity than on suitability of location or local building traditions.

## BROAD STREET

- 9-33 **One Weybosset Hill (1971):** Curtis and Davis, architect. 7-story, steel-frame structure with anodized aluminum curtain walls and banded tinted windows. Designed by architects associated with other projects in the Weybosset Hill Redevelopment Project Area, this simple metal box is typical of 1960s-type "office-park" construction: set back from the street with off-street parking and some landscaping, it demonstrates the trend toward suburban settings for office structures.

- 53 **U.S. Post Office, Weybosset Hill Station (1956):** 1-story brick building with center entrance flanked by bands of aluminum-frame windows. This simple structure typifies the bland, inexpensive building designs used increasingly by the Federal government after World War II.

**Gilbane Headquarters (1979-1980):** 5-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with regular fenestration and glassed-in entrance pavilion with solar collectors on the southwest corner. Founded by Irish immigrants in 1870, Gilbane Brothers has become a major construction firm of regional importance with projects around the world, including the installation for the Winter Olympics at Lake Placid, New York in 1980. Co-developer of the Weybosset Hill Redevelopment Project, the company's building occupies one of the last sites in this area. A simple, handsome structure, Gilbane Headquarters typifies office buildings of the late 1970s, designed to maximize efficient use of energy in heating and cooling the building.

- 60 **St Xavier's Academy (1856, 1865, 1895):** Murphy, Hindle and Wright, architect (1895). Victorian Gothic, 3½-story brick-and-stone structure with hip roof and projecting central entrance pavilion with rusticated stone portal; E-shape plan connected on southeast with brick structure erected in 1856 and enlarged in 1865. The Sisters of Mercy, who first came to Providence in 1851, settled temporarily in a small house on Westminster (then High) Street. St. Xavier's Academy, the first Roman Catholic secondary school in the state,

opened in this structure that same year, under the supervision of Mother Mary Xavier Warde, American founder of the Sisters of Mercy. Later in 1851, St Xavier's moved into the Stead House, a handsome, stuccoed Federal dwelling, at the corner of Broad and Claverick Streets. The school has remained in this location ever since, moving in 1855 into the brick structure behind the Stead House, which was demolished for the construction of the present main building. A wing at the rear was added in the mid-20th century. St Xavier's is an extremely handsome example of the gothicizing trend in late 19th-century ecclesiastical architecture. The institution is of major importance to the growth of Roman Catholicism in Rhode Island.

- 100 **Dexter Manor Apartment Building (1962):** 11-story, steel-frame structure with concrete, tile, and glass curtain walls. Dexter Manor exemplifies urban redevelopment of the 1950s and 1960s, when dense urban fabric, created over a long period of time, was dramatically replaced with green space and simple, monolithic structures. The uplifting qualities of this type of development were promoted by the International Style architects of the 1920s, but the Dexter Manor, sited adjacent to an interstate highway, is a distant and banal realization of Le Corbusier's "City for 3 Million." The building was the first in Providence of an increasingly prevalent type: high-rise housing for the elderly.

## BROADWAY

- 25 **Gulf Station (1968):** Curtis and Davis, architects. 1-story concrete-block circular structure with brick sheathing, surmounted by a tall metal pole supporting an illuminated globe near the top. This station is inspired more by popular exhibition-and-exhibitionist architecture than by more traditional sources for gasoline stations, which aim toward establishing a connotative message by their design. It transcends pop trends in roadside architecture to achieve a thin but engaging monumentality adjacent to and visible from the highway.

- 60 **The Regency Apartments (1966):** Curtis and Davis, architects. 13-story reinforced-concrete structure with regular fenestration and brick veneer and bay windows providing surface texture. Borrowing the monolithic monumentality and the verdant setting of the International Style apartment projects of the 1920s, the Regency Apartments is curiously wedded to the postwar Brutalist school, producing a timidly textured building that dilutes the intent of both modern theoretical stances. The first major apartment building Downtown, the Regency proved a great success and increased demand for more rental space in a city with few apartment buildings hitherto.

## CATHEDRAL SQUARE

- \* **Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul (1878):** Patrick C.

Keeley, architect. High Victorian, Romanesque-Gothic Revival, cruciform-plan church faced in rough-hewn sandstone ashlar with tall twin towers dominating the facade; cross-gable roof; Gothicizing details include ogival-arch windows in nave and rose windows in transepts and sanctuary; handsome interior in pointed Gothic style trimmed in polished gray marble. Saints Peter and Paul was erected to replace the earlier church on this site. Providence was designated an independent diocese in 1872, and this structure was designed to serve the needs of the major center of Roman Catholicism which Rhode Island had become in the late 19th century because of immigration from Ireland and Italy. The cathedral has been a major landmark in Providence since its construction, although its environs have changed drastically in recent years. Once at the intersection of two major thoroughfares, Weybosset and Westminster Streets, and surrounded by low-rise domestic and commercial structures, the cathedral now faces a plaza designed by I. M. Pei and Zion and Breen and sits amid modern structures erected during the Weybosset Hill redevelopment project of the 1970s.

- 1 **Chancery Office and Auditorium of the Diocese of Providence (1967):** E. F. Kennedy, architect. 3-story brick-faced steel structure with a center entrance surmounted by the Diocesan coat-of-arms and windows framed by projecting cast-concrete surrounds. A bland, utilitarian structure, the Chancery Office does little as a backdrop to animate the sterile space of Cathedral Square. It is, further, extremely anticlimactic both as the western terminus of Westminster Street from Downtown Providence and as the eastern terminus of the western portion of Westminster Street.
- 4 **4 Cathedral Square (1976):** Robinson Greene Beretta, architects. 5-story brick-sheathed steel-frame commercial block with apartments, an arcade on first story, and regularly spaced paired windows above. Mirroring 5 Cathedral Square across upper Westminster Street, this is a simple building that preserves the urban quality of Downtown by maintenance of the streetline. It is neither bland nor aggressive, but a pleasant background building.
- 5 **5 Cathedral Square (1976):** Robinson Greene Beretta, architects. 5-story brick-sheathed steel-frame structure with an arcade on first story and regularly spaced paired windows above. Like its mirror image, 4 Cathedral Square, this building takes advantage of the sloping site by using an arcade in front to minimize change in grade of the storefront levels. Mixed-use residential-commercial buildings such as these are rare in Providence.

#### CHESTNUT STREET

**Doyle Monument (1889, 1969):** Henry H. Kitson, sculptor. This life-size bronze statue of Mayor Thomas A. Doyle

was dedicated 3 June 1889 in Cathedral Square, where it defined the western end of Weybosset Street at its intersection with Westminster Street. The statue faced east, overlooking the city Doyle had served as mayor for eighteen years before his death in office in 1886. His tenure marked considerable consolidation for the city, with the organization of city governmental departments, the construction of City Hall, and the realignment of the numerous randomly placed streets created by the unplanned growth of the city in the 19th century. Mayor Doyle's statue was removed from this intersection in front of the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul during the Weybosset Hill Redevelopment Project and placed here at the corner of Chestnut and Broad Streets.

- 1 **Beneficent House (1969):** Paul Rudolf, architect. 9-story, brick-and-concrete-sheathed, steel-frame structure with interlocking, staggered "building-block" units creating richly textural elevations. The best of the boldly articulated "Brutalist" buildings erected in Providence and the only recent Downtown building by a major 20th-century American architect (as its quality suggests), Beneficent House demonstrates a departure from the pseudo-formal, monolithic structures of the 1950s and early 1960s, and, through use of stringcourses, suggests a more human scale. It was built by nearby Beneficent Church as housing for the elderly.
- 33\* **Daniel Arnold House (ca 1826):** John Holden Greene, architect. 2½-story, brick-and-wood-frame dwelling with a hip roof and monitor; 5-bay facade with 6-over-6 sash windows and center entrance with sidelights and elliptical fanlight behind delicate portico, modified Palladian window above entrance taken from a contemporary Greene house (now demolished) in Pawtucket; delicate cornice includes beadwork and guttae; two chimneys symmetrically placed on each of the side walls; partially restored interior includes original staircase and mantels salvaged from a similar house in Pawtucket designed by the same architect. The only survivor of a group of four houses designed by Greene — Providence's major early 19th-century architect — the Arnold House was moved to this site in 1967 when urban redevelopment plans called for clearing upper Westminster Street for the Weybosset Hill project. The sole intact reminder of the residential neighborhood that characterized the area in the early 19th century, the Arnold House typifies urban renewal preservation projects of the period. A single, domestic (not commercial) building was salvaged, while the historic Downtown fabric was removed. The house was moved and "overrestored" and put in an anti-urban setting incongruent with its historic context or present surroundings.
- 30-32 **Waite-Thresher Company Building (1911):** 5-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with mid-20th-century storefronts and pier-and-spandrel wall articulation on upper

stories with paired double-hung sash windows under segmental arches. Built for a jewelry manufacturing firm formerly located on Peck Street, the Waite-Thresher Building is part of the commercial and light-industrial development in the area south of Pine Street during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is still used for various light industries related to jewelry manufacturing.

- 55-57 **Swedish Workingmen's Association Hall (ca 1925):** 3-story, brick-sheathed structure with storefronts on first story and pilastered second and third stories with simple entablature below parapet; windows on second and third stories heavily altered. A simple commercial block based on Beaux-Arts prototypes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Swedish Workingmen's Association Hall employs a format typical of early twentieth century institutional buildings Downtown: the first story was rented to small shops or businesses while the upper stories were reserved for use by the institutional owner. The Association retained ownership of the building until the late 1930s; it remained in private ownership until its acquisition by Johnson and Wales in the mid-1960s.

#### CHAPEL STREET

- 48-50 **Parking Garage (ca 1960):** 2-story, reinforced-concrete structure with concrete parapets on each floor. Built in anticipation of the Weybosset Hill Redevelopment Project and heavily patronized by workers there, this deck, one of the least attractive structures in Downtown Providence, is an unfortunate frontispiece to the city for travelers arriving from the west.

#### CLEMENCE STREET

- 5 **Shepard's Warehouse (ca 1900):** A much altered 3-story brick building with a mid-20th-century storefront and evenly spaced sash windows with segmental-arch lintels on part of first and all of second story. Used by the nearby Shepard Company as adjunct storage, this building has been converted into a bar and commercial space. Poorly altered, it has little in common visually with adjacent structures; a sensitive rehabilitation, however, could have made it a positive element downtown.

#### CRAWFORD STREET

**Crawford Street Bridge (1928-1930):** Steel-and-concrete bridge resting on abutment walls 132 feet apart with intermediate supporting walls of reinforced concrete in pile foundations with granite block piers. Built to replace the Crawford Street Bridge of 1890, the present bridge is said to be the widest in the world. It eliminates much of the physical separation between College Hill to its east and Downtown to its west, but the separation of these two areas remains strong as a change in land use.

## CUSTOM HOUSE STREET

- 32\* **Real Estate Title Insurance Building (1875, ca 1920):** Victorian Gothic with fine Georgian Revival 1st-story facade; 5-story masonry building; unaltered 1920s storefront with narrow bronze-sheathed piers separating entrance on left from multipaned window with rope-turned moldings on right, four regularly spaced sash windows on upper stories with polychrome radiating voussoirs, polychrome banding second through fourth stories, stone stringcourses between stories, handsome 1920s interiors include marble-sheathed foyer with brass trim and hardwood paneled offices on second floor. This structure is an integral part of the 19th-century buildings that form the core of the Custom House Historic District.

## DORRANCE STREET

Named for Judge Dorrance, an early president of the Town Council, Dorrance Street follows the course of Muddy Dock Creek, which flowed south into the Providence River. The creek was bridged at the intersection of Weybosset Street in 1740, and by 1771 marked the western boundary of the paved streets in Providence. In 1827 the creekbed was finally filled, and Dorrance Street was created from Weybosset Street south. The street was extended north to Exchange Place in 1855, pursuant to a highway act passed by the General Assembly in 1854 to lay out, enlarge, and straighten the streets of Providence. The cobblestone paving was replaced by granite blocks on a concrete foundation in 1886.

- 1 **Avis Rent-a-Car Office (1960):** Prefabricated, 1-story office dominated by aluminum-frame windows on all sides and large back-lit plastic graphics. Its bold, "look-at-me" design is typical of nationwide chain operations that depend on buildings as signs. It is visually out of place beside the Biltmore. Functionally, however, this is an ideal location, within sight of the city's train and bus stations and next to its principal hotel.
- 10 **Howard Building (1957-1959; 1968):** Albert Harkness and Peter Geddes, architects; Robinson Green Beretta, architects for addition. 10- and 12-story, reinforced-concrete structure with stone-sheathed storefronts with plateglass windows, regularly spaced small rectangular windows on upper stories of the brick-sheathed Dorrance Street facade, regularly spaced small rectangular windows with alternating pre-cast concrete panels on upper stories of Westminster Street ell. These buildings are the nadir of large office-building design Downtown. The first important auditorium in Providence, Howard Hall, was constructed on this site in 1847 following the designs of Thomas A. Tefft. It was destroyed by fire in 1853, and, following the widening of Dorrance Street, a second Howard Building, also designed by Tefft, was

erected on the site in 1856. This structure succumbed to flames in 1858, and was replaced by the third Howard Building (James C. Bucklin, architect) in 1859. The second and third structures also had auditoriums, and the third hall, with seating capacity for 1200, was the site of many speeches, readings, and musical events until its conversion to office use in 1908. Structural weakness abetted by the hurricanes of 1938 and 1954 led to the demolition of the third Howard Building in 1956. Construction of the present office building began in 1957. The fourth Howard Building is a poorly designed structure, entirely inappropriate in its setting; the early portion is bland; the later, poorly sited. It has a negative impact on the intersection of Dorrance and Westminster Streets and also detracts from the visual quality of Kennedy Plaza to its north.

- 11\* **Biltmore Hotel (1920-1922, 1979):** Warren and Wetmore, architects; Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson and Abbott, architects for rehabilitation. Neo-Federal, 19-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with first three stories filling the trapezoidal lot and surmounted by 16-story L-shape tower; glass-sheathed exterior elevator at inside corner of L; 2-story round-head windows on uppermost stories define ballroom and dining room; interior altered during rehabilitation, but retains the elaborate Adamesque motifs in the lobby, former dining rooms, and ballroom. Built through the efforts of the Providence Chamber of Commerce, which initiated the Biltmore project and raised funds for the construction of this civic-cultural rallying point, the hotel was an important gathering place for Rhode Islanders until it closed in 1975. Its rehabilitation and reopening in 1979 have been an important step in the late 1970s revitalization of Downtown Providence. The Biltmore's genesis, decline, and rebirth recall the vicissitudes of Downtown Providence's commercial history. It is further distinguished by its important role in Providence social history. The building is also a landmark facing the largest open space in Downtown, Kennedy Plaza, and Burnside Park.
- 25\* **City Hall (1874-1878):** Samuel F. J. Thayer, architect. Second Empire; 5-story, cast-iron-and-masonry structure faced with granite; mansard roof; free-standing building nine bays wide and thirteen bays deep, rising three-and-a-half stories above full rusticated basement; splayed perron (with lamp standards mounted at each side) leading to central entrance pavilion which culminates in convex mansard "dome"; highly plastic wall treatment includes balustrades, pilasters, engaged columns, stringcourses, aedicular entrances and a roundel with a bust of Roger Williams above the second story; elaborate interior includes 5-story, central staircourt and elaborate chambers for the Mayor, City Council, and Aldermen. The Town House at Benefit and College Streets was the first municipal building in Providence. The brick Market House in Market Square was

used by the Town and City of Providence for municipal offices before the construction of the present City Hall. The City Hall lot, as the site was designated upon its acquisition in 1857, was the site of the City Hall Theatre and Harrington's Opera House between 1865-1874. The building is based on the 1860s Boston City Hall, one of the early civic buildings in the Second Empire style, which predominated as a government style in the late 1860s and 1870s. Unlike Boston City Hall, it is almost entirely unaltered and still in original use. Providence City Hall, like the Federal Building at the opposite end of the Kennedy Plaza Mall, is a key architectural anchor of this open urban space. Threatened with demolition by the 1959 Downtown Master Plan, City Hall is now undergoing restoration and provides a handsome monument to civic self-esteem from an earlier, more optimistic age and reflects the city's renewing sense of pride.

- 62\* **Union Trust Building (1901, 1920, 1928, 1964):** Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architects. Beaux-Arts, 12-story, steel-frame structure sheathed in brick and stone; original rusticated-stone arcaded wall treatment on lower two stories with Corinthian-column entrance portico below two figures carved by Daniel Chester French, rusticated stone-and-brick wall with evenly spaced sash windows on third story, regularly spaced windows with stone surrounds on upper stories, elaborate heavy bracketed modillion-and-dentil stone cornice, original marble-and-plaster Beaux-Arts interiors with stained-glass windows of pecuniary themes on the ground floor. The Bank of America, chartered in 1851, was reorganized in 1894 as the Union Trust Company. The expanding company — it absorbed nine other banks in its history — demolished the Curry and Richards Building (1868; Clifton A. Hall, architect) in 1900 to make room for its grand new offices. Additions and renovations were made in 1920, 1928, and (following its absorption by Industrial National Bank in 1954) 1964. The finest Beaux-Arts office building in Providence, the Union Trust Building was featured in the 8 November 1902 issue of *American Architect and Building News*, one of the leading national architectural journals of the period. The Union Trust Building is a well known, major landmark.

- 71-79 **Commercial Block (ca 1860):** Italianate, 4-story, brick-and-masonry structure with an L-shape plan; 20th-century storefronts, regularly spaced fenestration on Dorrance, Weybosset and Eddy Street elevations; modern interiors. Documentation suggests that this structure housed mixed uses in the 19th century; by the 1870s it included five jewelry manufacturing operations and Armington's Dry Goods Store. By the early 20th century, it had been taken over by commercial interests entirely. While renovated on the interior, the building's exterior has suffered relatively little modernization. Still a handsome mid-19th-century structure, it recalls the

evolution of the commercially oriented central business district.

- 76 **Case-Mead Building (1859, 1906):** 5-story, stucco-sheathed wood-frame building with mid-20th-century storefronts; heavy string courses above second and fourth stories with pier-and-spandrel wall system on third and fourth stories and paired windows on fifth story; bracketed box cornice. The original 4-story, frame Case-Mead Building was erected on this site in 1859. It housed an infantry hall in its high fourth story before the Infantry Hall was completed on South Main Street in 1880. During the late 19th century the infamous Turkish Parlor — an ill-reputed gathering place where, it was rumored, brazen women smoked — was located on the second floor. In 1906 the building was thoroughly remodeled: a fifth floor was created out of the upper half of the fourth story and the present wall articulation system was applied. The awkwardness of adapting the earlier fenestration to the remodeled articulation system gives the building much of its charm and vitality. Its interesting architectural quality and its role — albeit somewhat tawdry — in Providence social history make it a noteworthy though still undervalued landmark at a major Downtown intersection.
- 88 **Teste Block (1859-1860, 1879):** Italianate, 4-story brick building with 12-bay storefront and a broad cornice above first story; 6-bay facade on upper stories defined by narrow paired sash windows with polychrome segmental arches over each pair, stone stringcourses between each story; broad frieze and wide eaves. Begun in 1859, the Teste Block was occupied the following year and expanded in 1879. For many years, a drug firm occupied the storefront, which today is a men's clothing store. The upper stories have always housed small offices. An extremely handsome and well preserved mid-19th-century building, the Teste Block is the visual highlight of the intersection of Dorrance and Weybosset Streets.
- 90-96 **Dorrance Building (ca 1920):** 2-story brick structure with central entrance on first story flanked by two storefronts with plateglass windows and clustered sash windows on second; simple band cornice. The Dorrance Building exemplifies the small vernacular commercial building predominant in the 1920s and 1930s.
- 98-106 **Narragansett Garage (1923):** 3-story, brick-and-concrete structure with automobile entrance at center of first story with flanking doors and windows; evenly spaced paired windows on upper stories, all blocked down; simple parapet around roof. Built as a parking garage for the Narragansett Hotel (which stood across Dorrance Street until its demolition in 1960), the structure is now the oldest parking structure Downtown.

123-131 **Masonic Temple (1897):** Fred E. Field, architect. 5-story masonry structure with irregular plan (to fit lot); walls fully articulated only on Dorrance and Pine Street elevations; unaltered 1st-story, cast-iron storefronts with engaged Tuscan columns separating plate-glass windows; upper stories organized around colossal Corinthian pilasters on piers; corbeled bracketed cornice; interior undergoing renovation for office space in 1980. Built to replace the original Masonic Temple (1884-1886; William R. Walker, architect) on this site, which burned in 1896, this building was abandoned in the 1960s for a suburban location. Increased demand for office space Downtown and the relocation of the State Court complex to a nearby site made this an attractive building for rehabilitation as office space. One of the outstanding late 19th-century buildings in Providence, the Masonic Temple makes a fine gateway to the southern entrance of the central business district.

128-134\* **"Shakespeare Hall," later Ballou, Johnson and Nichols (1838-1844, ca 1855):** James Bucklin, architect (1838). 6-story masonry structure with stuccoed walls punctuated by regularly spaced sash windows, facade defined by 3½-story Doric pilasters now without entablature; open interiors. Built as a 3½-story, temple-front theatre in the Greek Revival style, "Shakespeare Hall" opened in October of 1838. Its novelty soon wore off however, and its closing in 1844 was further precipitated by objections from the nearby Second Baptist Church. The same year, the building was converted to a planetarium where Dr. Dionysus Lardner conducted lectures on astronomy until a fire left only the exterior walls standing in October of 1844. It was rebuilt and later used as a warehouse by the A. & W. Sprague Manufacturing Company and later by B. B. & R. Knight. It was used as office and warehouse by Ballou, Johnson and Nichols, hard-goods wholesalers, from 1903 to 1977. Current plans call for its rehabilitation as office space. The "Shakespeare Hall" Building, the earliest extant theatre building in Providence, chronicles the growth of Downtown and the diversification and specialization of land use.

## DYER STREET

101\* **Owen Building (1866, 1877):** Stone and Carpenter, architects (1877). Second Empire; 4½-story granite-and-metal-trimmed-brick building with slate mansard roof; trapezoidal plan (to fit site); slightly altered first story retains granite piers and display windows; cast-iron cornice above first story, regularly spaced sash windows on upper stories with paired round-head windows over Pine Street entrance; richly articulated sheet-metal cornice and dormers. Built by George and Smith Owen in 1866, it was remodeled in 1877 for use by Owen Brothers, manufacturers of worsted yarn. One of the city's most handsome late 19th-century buildings, it has been used for warehouse space, retail enter-

prises, office space, and most recently as a restaurant. Located at the edge of Downtown and overlooking the Providence River, the Owen Building and the adjacent Hay Block make a handsome edge and recall the more active days of the Port of Providence, when packet boats and ships docked at wharves in front of the building.

117-135\* **Hay Building (1867):** Second Empire, 3½-story, granite-trimmed brick structure, trapezoidal in plan, with cast-iron storefronts and the date "1867" worked in red slate on the short, southeast face of the mansard roof; original storefronts little altered, regularly spaced sash windows (replaced in 1979) with granite lintels on upper stories; quoined corners; dentil cornice; board-and-batten dormers. The Hay Block, originally a warehouse adjacent to the Port of Providence, has long housed small retail and commercial enterprises. It underwent rehabilitation as condominium office space in 1979-1980. Built by Alexander Duncan, a Scot related to and allied in business with Cyrus Butler, the Hay Block is a fine example of the Second Empire Style. Only the Hay and Owen Blocks and Duncan's warehouse at 146 Dyer Street remain of the late 19th-century waterfront structures, many of which were owned by Duncan and his heirs.

146 **Alexander Duncan Warehouse (ca 1880):** 2-story, brick structure with corbel cornice and slate hip roof; polychrome stone relieving arches over 2nd-story windows; original loading bays on first story now blocked down. Duncan, a Scot, came to America in 1822 and married Cyrus Butler's niece; he was associated in business with Butler in Providence during the 1840s and also served as President of the Providence and Worcester Railroad Company. While he removed to England during the Civil War, he maintained real-estate interests in Rhode Island, building both this warehouse and the nearby Hay Block at 121 Dyer. It served as a harborside warehouse until purchased by Narragansett Electric around the turn of the century.

146 rear **Narragansett Electric Battery Substation (ca 1920):** 3-story brick structure with a flat roof and simple band cornice and quoined corners. This building has been used by the Narragansett Electric Company since its construction.

200 **Kaiser-Frazer Showroom, now Social Security Office (1952):** Oresto di Saia, architect. 1- and 2-story, stuccoed building with flat roofs; front section — trapezoidal plan with curved corner section and large windows; rear section — regularly fenestrated broad horizontal bands separating the two stories. Designed in the "moderne" style typical of sophisticated late-Thirties commercial architecture, but which retained currency for automobile showrooms into the Fifties, the building was erected as an automobile dealership for the recently formed Kaiser-Frazer Corpora-

tion. After the Kaiser-Frazer Corporation ceased producing automobiles in 1955, the building was converted to office use.

## EDDY STREET

Eddy Street takes its name from Eddy's Point, a small island in the Providence River connected to the mainland by a man-made embankment near the present-day intersection of Eddy and Dyer Streets. The island was settled by brothers Joseph and Barnard Eddy in the eighteenth century, and the area around it developed into an active commercial area as shipyards were established on the west side of the Providence River. By 1807, the street extended from Westminster Street to the river, and in 1867 it was extended north from Westminster Street to Fountain Street.

- 13 **Biltmore Garage (Shoppers Parkade, 1968):** 5-story, reinforced-concrete structure. Built to provide parking for and connected by a "skywalk" to the adjacent Biltmore Hotel, the structure still serves as a major parking garage Downtown, though it is no longer owned by the hotel. The shift from public to private transportation in the mid-20th century has necessitated the allocation of increasingly large amounts of space for daily storage of automobiles. The automobile, more than any other single force, has abetted the erosion of central business districts, but parking garages, such as this one, at least maintain a scale and intensity of use compatible with the Downtown.
- 51- **Aldrich Estate Building (1908):** 6-story, brick-sheathed  
55 building with original cast-iron storefront and elaborately articulated upper stories with paired sash windows, triple-sash windows, and projecting metal prismatic and rectangular bay windows; corbel cornice; elaborate iron fire escape with twin helical stairs between second and sixth stories. Built by the estate of Anson N. Aldrich, this commercial block replaced the Girard Hotel (ca 1890). Similar in scale to adjacent buildings, the Aldrich Building is distinguished by its highly plastic facade treatment.
- 57- **Smith Building (1912):** Martin and Hall, architect. 8-story,  
59 brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with mid-20th century storefronts and pier-and-spandrel system on upper stories with Chicago windows and quoined corners; bracketed box cornice with wide eaves. The Smith Building, erected by Edwin A. Smith, a real-estate developer, exemplifies the handsome commercial building type that rose during the prosperous years of the early 20th century.
- 95- **Commercial Building (1887):** 4-story, brick-sheathed build-  
97 ing with mid-20th-century storefront, bay window on second story, three evenly spaced sash windows on third story, three paired sash windows on fourth story.

- 211 **Typesetting Service Building (1957, 1965):** 1-story, brick building with flat roof behind a parapet; entrance on truncated corner, with regular fenestration on Clifford and Eddy Street elevations. Built for the current owners in 1957, the structure was substantially enlarged in 1965.

## EMPIRE STREET

By the turn of the century, Providence had grown tremendously with little comprehensive planning given to traffic and circulation. To improve the transportation network, the city retained Bion J. Arnold, a consulting engineer from Chicago, to investigate public transportation and to recommend improvements in the system. His 1911 report called for the creation of new or enlarged streets to accommodate street railways and made particular note of the cramped condition of Downtown arteries. Empire Street was one of the major Downtown improvements based on this report and replaced Walker Street, a narrow road which ran from Fountain to Westminster Street. In 1915, the street was widened to eighty feet and extended south to Weybosset Street opposite its intersection with Chestnut Street. One of the buildings condemned for this expansion was the Empire Theatre, located at the previous southern terminus of the street, which had been renamed after the theatre in 1901.

- 75 **Lyman Building (ca 1926):** 2-story, pre-cast-stone and brick structure with glass and aluminum storefronts, stylized striated corner pilasters, and regularly spaced sash windows on the second story. Erected on the site of Lyman Hall, a small auditorium, this modest commercial building has housed small shops and offices throughout its history. Like most other buildings on Empire Street (widened and opened from Washington to Weybosset Street in 1915), the Lyman Building is a small, simple commercial structure from the 1920s.
- 87 **Old Stone Bank, Empire Street Branch (1929):** Howe and Church, assisted by Jackson, Robertson and Adams, architect. Classical Revival, 3-story, granite-and-brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with a fully articulated, stylized triumphal-arch-motif facade; mullioned windows with fan lights fill the arches; and the main entrance is in the lower portion of the central arch; the banking hall has been heavily altered. Built as a branch of the Old Stone Bank, the successor firm of the Providence Institution for Savings (founded 1819), this building is the visual highlight in a block of simpler early 20th-century commercial blocks.
- 95- **Commercial Block (1927):** 3-story, brick-sheathed building  
121 with original storefronts of wood-framed display windows, large plateglass windows with transom lights on the second story, and sash windows on the third story;

bracketed cornice with parapet. Constructed in the decade following the widening of Empire Street in 1915, this retail and office building recalls the prosperity of that period. The formerly residential neighborhood was upset by the gradual westward push of the central business district which reached this area in the second and third decades of the 20th-century, and low-rise vernacular commercial structures like this one filled the area.

- 150 **Providence Public Library (1900, 1952-1954):** Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architects; Howe, Prout and Ekman, architects for 1954 addition. Original building: Beaux-Arts, 2-story, granite-and-brick structure with a copper, low hip roof, an elaborate 13-bay facade facing Washington Street and set back from street behind a balustrade and a 3-bay entrance porch at center of facade on the first story; bracketed boxed cornice with decorative frieze; some original interior spaces with Beaux-Arts detailing. 1954 addition: Moderne, 3-story, granite-and-marble-veneer, steel-frame structure with undecorated wall surface and tall, narrow, regularly spaced windows on first story and square windows above. Established in 1875, the Providence Public Library successively occupied parts of three other Downtown buildings, including the Butler Exchange, before moving into the 1900 structure. A 25-year drive for additional facilities was culminated by the completion of the 1954 structure. Stone, Carpenter and Willson, Providence's leading turn-of-the-century architectural firm, won the design competition for the Public Library with this elaborate Renaissance-derived structure, which owes a considerable debt to McKim, Mead and White's Boston Public Library of 1892; the exterior owes much to Sansovino's library on St. Mark's Square in Venice, erected in 1554. Plans and drawings of the building were published in the prestigious *American Architect and Building News*. The 1954 addition, however, ignores the scale and texture of the original building and attempts, by siting, to hide the earlier structure.

## EXCHANGE TERRACE

**City Hall Park (1892, 1898, 1906, 1911, 1952):** Landscaped park bounded by Exchange Terrace to the north and east, Washington Street and Kennedy Plaza to the south, and Dorrance Street to the west, and divided by Francis Street. This open space is subdivided by rambling paths through each of the two sections. Statuary includes the equestrian portrait of General Ambrose E. Burnside (1887; Launt Thompson, sculptor) and the complex figural composition of the Bajnotti Fountain (1902; Enid Yandell, sculptor) in the eastern section and the Scout Monument (1911; Henri Schonhardt, sculptor) dedicated to Major Henry H. Young in the western section; a wooden Roll of Honor for World War II in the southeast corner of the eastern section is being superseded by a more perma-

ment memorial at the Civic Center. Located on an artificial knoll created as an approach to the Union Station located at grade, City Hall Park was dedicated in 1892 and landscaped following the completion of the station in 1898. Monumental sculpture was added in the first decade of the 20th century, including the resetting of the Burnside Monument from Exchange Place in 1906. The monuments in the park are randomly placed, serving no discernable visual purpose, and at odds with the landscaping of the park. Laid out in a more picturesque manner than Exchange Place Mall to the south, City Hall Park contrasts with that busier area and sets off Union Station. Conceived in the late 19th-century "City Beautiful" spirit, it is less successful as a pedestrian transportation link than as a retreat.

- 3 **Federal Building Annex, now John O. Pastore Building (1938-1940):** Jackson, Robertson and Adams, architects; Neo-Federal, 3-story, brick-and-stone-sheathed, steel-frame structure with truncated hip roof; 5-bay, 2-story stone frontispiece (embellished with Art Deco reliefs illustrating mail distribution) defined by stylized Tuscan pilasters supporting dentil cornice and flanked by 2-story projecting gable-end pavilions; simple, original, stone-sheathed lobby. Built to relieve overcrowding in the adjacent Federal Building (1908), this annex replaced the city's Fire Department Headquarters (1903). It served as the main post office for Providence until the automated facility in the West River Industrial Park was completed in 1960. It was named after the former governor and U.S. Senator in 1978. The Pastore Building is a typical and good example of structures erected by the Federal Government under Works Progress Administration in the Depression.
- 4\* **Union Station (1896-1898):** Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architect. Beaux-Arts complex of four structures (the fifth, easternmost burned in 1941, but its basement remains) includes the large, central passenger station flanked by 2-story, square-plan buildings with a 4-story structure at the western end; all are brick-sheathed, steel-frame structures with dentil cornices and hip roofs. The passenger station has a projecting central pavilion designed as a triumphal-arch "gateway" entrance; its 2-story exterior articulation belies the interior spatial organization, with a large rectangular waiting room occupying most of this block. The flanking buildings have been altered on their interiors, but the building immediately west of the passenger station, originally a restaurant, retains its original fireplace with an elaborate wooden mantel. Built to replace the first Union Station (1848; Thomas A. Tefft, architect) which stood 500 feet south in the middle of today's Kennedy Plaza, Union Station was conceived on a monumental civic scale as a gateway to the city. It stands on an artificial knoll created to elevate railroad traffic above the existing grade and makes use of ped-

estrian subways to provide access to the several tracks at the rear of the complex. As the major transportation hub for the city, it combined both local commuter-rail and inter-city service, and its location overlooking Exchange Place made connection with local and suburban trolley and bus lines easy. The large canopy over the entrance, the colonnades connecting the buildings, and the original shed over the tracks had been removed by the early 1950s, when the entire complex was painted a monochromatic grey. The complex has undergone a period of decline since the 1950s, concurrent with waning railroad passenger use. In 1976, its exterior was cleaned and returned to its original color scheme, and its interior was patched and repainted. Under the pending Capitol Center project, the complex is scheduled for recycling once the tracks are moved, and plans call for reconstruction of the eastern building. A handsome and well sited building, Union Station is a major monument of late 19th- and early 20th-century civic planning, linking local and interstate transportation systems. Its construction radically altered the topography of Downtown Providence, filling the Cove Basin and opening Kennedy Plaza. Its reliance on underground ramps and the sophisticated trusswork on the viaduct at its rear made it an engineering milestone.

#### FENNER STREET

- 30 **Cathedral Rectory (ca 1880):** 3½-story brick building with a mansard roof; 3-bay facade with recessed center entrance through a round-head-arch portal; paired sash windows share common ogival-arch lintels with polychrome radiating voussiors; bracketed cornice. Built as a rectory soon after the completion of the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, this dwelling is akin to Roman Catholic rectories built throughout Rhode Island in the late 19th century, though as the episcopal see it is more substantial and elaborate than those for parish churches.

#### FOUNTAIN STREET

Fountain Street commemorates the solution of one of the vital problems facing settlers on the west side in the 18th century, fresh water. The street takes its name from the spring, located near the present-day intersection of Dean and Fountain Streets, which supplied water to the eastern part of Downtown through a three-quarter-mile-long conduit of hollow logs laid in 1772. By 1825, the street ran from Dean Street to Mathewson Street. It was extended to West Exchange Street in 1870 and widened to eighty feet in 1915, concurrent with the widening of Empire Street and the construction of LaSalle Square.

- 9-35 **Providence Journal Garage (1957):** 1- and 2-story, brick-glass- and aluminum-sheathed, steel-frame building with flat roofs; three irregularly placed doors on first story,

brick piers and window wall on second story. This building was constructed as an adjunct facility to the Providence Journal Building to facilitate distribution of the newspaper by truck. Though unattractive, it has one point of interest, the weather flags flown from the rooftop. Colorful and intriguing, these flags add to the character of Downtown Providence.

- 30-34 **Commercial Building (ca 1920):** 1-story brick building with a flat roof; irregularly placed mullioned display windows with doors interpolated randomly. In an area dominated by large office buildings, this structure is typical of the small-scale commercial buildings erected throughout the city in the early 20th century, more frequently in residential areas.
- 35-69 **Providence Journal Company Building (1934, 1948):** Albert Kahn, Incorporated, architect. Georgian Revival; four stories; brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with a flat roof. Eighteen bays wide and nine bays deep, the building's first story, set on a stone foundation, has mullioned, round-head windows, a central entrance, and a string-course above the first story; 2-story, simple, brick pilasters separate the rectangular windows on second and third stories, and a heavy cornice above the third story sets off the evenly spaced rectangular windows on the fourth story; and a simple penthouse is on the roof. Interiors were refinished in the mid-1970s by Warren Platner Associates. The lobby, in particular, is a good example of Seventies high-style corporate chic. The Providence Journal Company, founded in 1829, grew into the state's major newspaper by the late 19th century. The Metcalf family, owners of the Wanskuck Company, acquired the paper at the turn of the century and still manage the company. The Journal rapidly outgrew its 1906 building at 203 Westminster Street and constructed its present facilities in the early 1930s. The fourth story was added in 1948. The major Downtown building project during the depression years of the 1930s, the Providence Journal Company Building demonstrates the continued preference for Georgian-inspired buildings in Providence. The building with its well-scaled mass and detailing is an important part of Fountain Street.
- 40 **Gardner Building (ca 1918, 1925):** 8-story, stone-and-yellow-brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with a 9-story tower on northeast corner; display windows and aluminum entrance on the first story; regular piers terminating in arches above eighth floor. Built as an office building by Nathan L. Gardner, President of R. L. Greene Paper Company, the structure was expanded and renovated in 1925 when Bryant and Stratton Business College occupied the building, the main alteration being the addition of the two uppermost stories. It now houses business offices and several departments of the City government. While

not an assertive architectural monument, the Gardner Building is a handsome background building that defines the scale of Fountain Street and evinces the period of this area's evolution into an integral part of the downtown in the second and third decades of this century.

70-72 **Commercial Building (ca 1897):** 2-story brick building; mid-20th-century storefront on the first story and five evenly-spaced sash windows on the second story; band cornice with low parapet. Now isolated because of the demolition of surrounding structures this small, unpretentious commercial structure was a typical background serving as infill in the commercial fabric.

96-112 **Palmer Block (1915):** Stone, Carpenter and Sheldon, architect. 7-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with generally original storefronts and pier-and-spandrel system on upper stories resolved into 7-bay facade with each bay containing three sash windows; four upper stories sheathed in contrasting color brick; stone entablature and parapet above seventh story. The Palmer Block, built by Julius Palmer of Warwick, has housed retail stores at street level and offices on the upper floors throughout its history.

111 **John E. Fogarty Memorial Building (1967):** Castellucci, Galli & Planka Associates, architect. 3-story reinforced-concrete structure with a flat roof and penthouse; widely spaced concrete piers separating plate-glass windows separated by projecting piers on upper stories. This building was erected to house State of Rhode Island Welfare Services. Though lacking the bold plasticity and varied massing of landmark Brutalist buildings, the Fogarty Building is a better solution for its site than those more aggressive structures. It maintains the scale of nearby buildings while keeping its own architectural integrity.

120-124 **Diocese House, later Hotel Plaza, now Civic View Inn (1911):** 4-story brick building with mid-20th-century stuccoed storefronts covered by an applied mansard "roof" below the second story; five evenly spaced windows between massive corner piers on upper stories; aluminum siding above fourth story covering cornice. Built by the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island as a rescue-mission, the building has since been used as a hotel. More recently it has housed one of the city's few semi-topless bars.

132 **Commercial Building, McDonald's (ca 1915):** 2-story brick building with late 1970s storefront sheathed in new "antique" brick and fenestration on both stories irregularly placed under segmental arches of varying widths. This retail commercial building was modified to accommodate a McDonald's fast-food restaurant, and its original storefront was obliterated by inappropriate alterations. Only

in its massing does the building relate successfully to neighboring structures.

186 **Commercial Building, now Burger King (ca 1910):** Vernacular, commercial, 1-story brick structure with three large, regularly spaced window bays on facade and a parapet entablature with decorative wood brackets and frieze. Now overshadowed by neighboring buildings, this building has been recently rehabilitated as a Burger King fast-food restaurant — marred slightly by the blocked-down windows — which has enhanced its appearance and improved the visual quality of Fountain and Empire Streets.

205-215 **Police and Fire Department Headquarters (1938-1940):** Designed by the Office of the Commissioner of Public Buildings. 4-story, stone-sheathed, steel-frame building with an L-shaped plan. The first story of smooth-cut stone and regularly spaced windows is treated as a basement. The pedimented projecting central pavilion with four simple pilasters is flanked on either side by 11 bays of windows on the second and third stories which are connected vertically by decorated metal spandrels. A stringcourse above third floor sets off regularly spaced square windows on fourth story and a parapet crowns the building. Interiors are plain. This structure brought the Police and Fire Departments together in one building. The central police station (1895) stood on a block bounded by Fountain, Sabin, and Beverly Streets. The first central fire station (1873, G. W. Cady, architect) at the east end of Exchange Plaza, on the site of the present Federal Building was replaced in 1903 by a second structure on Exchange Terrace (Martin and Hall, architects) on the site of the Federal Building Annex. The police and fire department building demonstrates Providence's continuing interest in a traditional architectural vocabulary for civic structures into the 1940s. Rather austere in its adaptation, this building complements the more elaborate Public Library across the street. Because of redevelopment to the north and west, however, the building's visual impact, chiefly limited to its south facade, has been lessened, for now its most visible side is its unadorned, irregular rear elevation.

## FRANKLIN STREET

13 **Armenian Euphrates Evangelical Church (1842, 1952):** 1-story brick building with irregular fenestration and a cross-gable roof with small spire at the crossing. The construction of the adjacent interstate highway and the redevelopment of land immediately adjacent have left this small structure in uncomfortable isolation; unlike the nearby cathedral, the Armenian Church lacks the monumentality to compensate for the immense change in the scale recently effected.

## FRIENDSHIP STREET

91 **Horace Remington & Son Building (1888):** 5-story masonry structure with regularly spaced segmental-arch windows on each elevation; metal cornice. This is a simple, unaltered example typical of late 19th-century industrial architecture. Remington & Son, gold and silver refiners, have occupied the structure since the 1890s.

165 **The Met Cafe (ca 1930):** 1-story brick structure with a center entrance flanked by plate-glass windows. This building is typical of those very simple structures erected to house small businesses in the first third of this century. Since World War II, however, it has been used as a bar. It has become a lively, if somewhat raffish, institution drawing a wide range of clients from throughout the city.

## GREENE STREET

10 **Telephone Credit Union Building (1976):** Zane Anderson, architect. 2-story brick-faced structure with rounded corners projecting cylindrical turrets, and irregularly spaced windows arranged in bands on each story, and a simple band cornice of molded concrete. Located across Greene Street from the New England Telephone Company Building (234 Washington Street), this small-scale building is a handsome example of modern urban architecture. The materials and rounded corners complement those on the adjacent First Universalist Church without being stridently imitative, and the building's siting and massing improve the streetscape.

## JACKSON WALKWAY

1-2 **Regency East, Regency West (1971 et seq.):** Curtis and Davis, architects. 12-story, reinforced-concrete structures with dark metal panels and windows filling the structural openings on exterior in a grid pattern. Erected following the success of the adjacent Regency (60 Broadway), these simple later additions are bland boxes. The large court formed by these three buildings is given over largely to parking.

4 **Grace Church Housing for the Elderly (1979):** Robinson Green Beretta, architect. 8-story main block with a 4-story flanking wing, steel-frame-and-cinder-block construction sheathed in brick; irregular block massing and fenestration. Superficially similar to another complex in the area, Beneficent House, the Grace Church project lacks the vitality of Paul Rudolf's design, but it is an adequate building in its context.

## KENNEDY PLAZA

Exchange Place Mall (1848, 1898, 1914, 1964): Large open

space approximately 775 feet long by 250 feet wide bounded north by Washington Street, south by buildings on Kennedy Plaza, east by Exchange Street, and west by Dorrance Street; central park strip approximately 500 feet long and 90 feet wide with six regularly spaced planting pockets; Soldiers and Sailors Monument (1871) by Randolph Rogers of Rome, a stepped, octagonal monument with statuary at four corners and top, located in center of strip; Trolley Shelter (1914), Martin and Hall, architects, octagonal iron-frame-and-glass, 1-story structure with elaborate wrought-iron decorative trim located at western end of mall. Originally known as Exchange Place, this urban open space was defined in 1848 with the construction of the first Union Station on its north side and office buildings (including the still-extant Exchange Bank Building at 28-32 Kennedy Plaza) on its south; the Cove stood just north of the station. The Soldiers and Sailors Monument was installed in 1871 at the western end of Exchange Place and remained there until moved to its present site in 1906; the monument to General Ambrose Burnside was erected in 1887, and it, too, was moved in 1906. The area was greatly expanded by the filling of the Cove in 1892 and the completion of Union Station in 1898; consequently a comprehensive design scheme for the area called for the development of this as park space and for a new Federal Building opposite City Hall. The area was renamed Kennedy Plaza in memory of the late president in 1964. The open space that comprises both Exchange Place Mall and City Hall Park is the largest and most important park in Downtown Providence. The area is an active space that has become a 20th-century version of the early town square. Though somewhat altered, it is further significant as a typical approach to city planning at the turn-of-the-century.

25\* **Federal Building (1908):** Clarke and Howe, architect. Beaux-Arts, 4-story, limestone-sheathed building with hip roof; rusticated first story; 3-bay central projecting pavilions on east and west facades and 10-bay north and south elevations with colossal Corinthian pilasters; full entablature with modillion cornice and balustrade parapet above; monumental marble sculptures representing America and Providence (carved by John Massey Rhind) flank the entrance on the west; handsome original interior spaces include slightly altered lobby and paneled Federal Court Suite. The product of a competition held by the U.S. Department of the Treasury in 1903, the Federal Building relieved the pressure of a burgeoning bureaucracy on the Federal Building of 1857 at Weybosset and Custom House Streets. As a handsome example of Beaux-Arts Neoclassicism, the Federal Building is a vital architectural element which anchors and defines the east end of Kennedy Plaza.

28-32 **Exchange Bank Building, now Briggs Ltd. (1845):** Tallman and Bucklin, architect-builders. Greek Revival; 4-story

(originally 3-story) brick building with a neo-colonial, mid-20th-century storefront; 5-bay facade, 11-bay side elevation; sash windows with stone lintels, wide brick stringcourse above third story (at original roof-cornice line); boxed cornice above decorative frieze. Founded in 1801, the Exchange Bank built this structure in 1845; it originally occupied the length of Exchange Street between Kennedy Plaza and Westminster Street. In 1888, the southern portion was replaced by the present Queen Anne style structure at 59-63 Westminster Street. Sometime in this century the fourth story was added. Construction of the Exchange Bank signaled the growing importance of the Turk's Head area as Providence's financial district. Now the oldest building in the area, Exchange Bank is an important element in the block which defines the southeast side of Kennedy Plaza.

33-39 **First Wheaton and Anthony Building (1855):** Italianate 5-story, brick-sheathed structure with a shed roof; cast-iron storefront with some mid-20th-century overlay; a 9-bay facade of sash windows with brownstone lintels; brownstone quoining; boxed cornice above decorative frieze. The First Wheaton and Anthony Building housed a number of downtown offices of outlying textile mills throughout the latter half of the 19th century including those owned by Royal C. Taft (Weybosset Mills in Olneyville), Henry J. Steere (Steere Worsted Mills), and Jesse H. Metcalf (Wanskuck Company). The growth of a financial district around the Turk's Head made a downtown office desirable for many industrial firms. Similar to the Exchange Bank Building next door, the First Wheaton and Anthony Building achieves a greater monumentality through larger scale and heavier detailing. This handsome building is an important part of the visual and historical fabric of Kennedy Plaza.

55 **Industrial National Bank Building (1928):** Walker and Gillette, architects. 26-story, Art Deco, granite-sheathed, steel-frame skyscraper with stepped, pyramidal massing with major setbacks above 15th, 22nd, and 26th stories and a 4-story square lantern on top; 2-story base articulated with stylized classical motifs including colossal round-head window over central entrances on Kennedy Plaza and Westminster Street; original interiors include superb classicizing Art Deco banking hall with Ionic-colonnade screen around the perimeter of the room. The Industrial Trust Company, founded in 1887, first occupied a building on Westminster Street remodeled for the bank's use by Stone, Carpenter and Willson (demolished in the early 1970s). Rapid growth necessitated the larger quarters provided by the current structure on the site of the Second Empire style Butler Exchange (1873; Arthur Gilman, architect), which was demolished in 1925 for the present structure. The largest banking institution in the state, Industrial National Bank remains a regionally important firm. The Industrial Bank Building, the only 1920s sky-

scraper in Providence, is undoubtedly the city's best-known landmark. Its stepped-back massing and Art Deco detailing relate it closely to contemporary New York skyscrapers, notably the Chrysler Building (1929-1932; William Van Allen, architect) and the Empire State Building (1930-31; Shreve, Lamb & Harmon, architect); completed before the construction of either the Chrysler or Empire State Buildings, it is an early and important monument of the style. Its size and unique shape make it readily identifiable from any angle. Its siting is masterful, for as Winston Weisman has observed, a building of this scale needs an "open parklike area of sufficient size to provide a vista." Kennedy Plaza and Burnside Park furnish this necessary balance (an arrangement which anticipates the spatial organization of high-rise complexes built since) while maintaining an urban feeling.

66-68 **The Ming Garden (1903):** 3-story brick building with tiled modern entrance (similar entrance on Westminster Street side of building) and large plate-glass windows on upper stories; modern interior by Morris Nathanson (ground floor) and Ira Rakatansky (upper floor). This building has long housed a Chinese restaurant. Though architecturally undistinguished outside, the Ming Garden is a major Providence institution with handsome interiors highly appropriate to its current use. Ming Garden is the longest lived of a popular type, the Chinese restaurant, which has been an important part of the urban scene since the early 20th century.

70 **People's Bank (1949):** Cram and Ferguson, architect. 6-story, brick-and-polished-granite-sheathed, steel-frame building with flat roofs on the 6-story towers at Kennedy Plaza and Westminster Street ends of the building and a pitched skylight over the 1-story connecting block; Westminster Street and Kennedy Plaza facades identical with polished-granite first story with bronze entrances; projecting flat structural canopy above first story; brick wall surface on upper stories broken by broad continuous vertical bay of glass-block windows flanked by similar narrow bands; handsome original interior of simple oak wainscoting and vaulted plaster ceiling with skylight. Incorporated in 1857, People's Bank moved from its 1913 temple-front building on Market Square to this structure upon its completion. A tidy illustration of mid-20th-century Moderne, it is the only fully realized example in Downtown Providence and provides interesting contrast with older nearby structures while maintaining the scale of the street.

## LA SALLE SQUARE

1 **Providence Civic Center (1972):** Ellerbee Associates, architect. 3-story, polygonal-plan, reinforced-concrete-and-steel-frame structure with a flat roof; glass-and-steel entrance pavilion on facade. Part of the Weybosset Hill Redevelopment Project spawned by the city's 1959 Master Plan,

the Civic Center provides the largest indoor space in the state for concerts, exhibitions, and athletic events. Administered by an independent Civic Center Authority, it has been extremely successful in attracting major entertainers — from rock groups through Frank Sinatra to the Boston Pops — and in promoting exhibitions that draw audiences from all of southern New England. Its suprahuman monumentality is a radical departure from the scale of most buildings Downtown, but this contrast is minimized by its relative isolation near the comparably scaled interstate highway, away from the densely built part of the central business district.

## MATHEWSON STREET

Until the middle of the eighteenth century, the Mathewson Farm extended from Clemence Street to present-day Cathedral Square between Weybosset and Washington Streets, and the family homestead stood near today's intersection of Washington and Mathewson Streets. The farm was purchased for development in the early 1750s, and the path that became Mathewson Street was established soon after. Known as School Street from Westminster Street south — because of the schoolhouse erected near the intersection of Chapel and Mathewson Streets in the mid-1750s — and as Furnace Lane north of Westminster Street — because of the forge located on that portion — the street was renamed Mathewson Street in 1807 to commemorate its early history.

- 112 **Plymouth Block (1892):** 2-story, masonry structure with mid-20th-century storefronts, and bay windows at either end of the second story — now sheathed with aluminum siding — with aluminum-frame sash windows in center. The Plymouth Block was built by Central Real Estate Company, investors in commercial property. Heavy alterations now obscure the facade and the interior of this building. It is similar in scale to its neighbors.
- 119-127 **Former Rialto Theatre, previously Westminster Congregational Church (1829, 1902, 1950s):** Russell Warren, architect for original structure; William R. Walker and Son, architects for 1902 facade renovations. 3-story, stone-and-brick-sheathed, wood-and-masonry structure with mid-20th-century storefronts; five regularly spaced 2-story round-head windows with stone trim and decorated keystones on upper stories; heavy cornice; original stuccoed rubble-stone walls exposed at rear of side walls. The Westminster Congregational Society was formed in 1828, and construction of their meetinghouse began almost immediately. The stuccoed-stone octastyle Ionic temple was a fully realized academic treatment of the Greek order. The congregation moved to Adelaide Avenue in 1902. At that time, the portico was removed, a new facade was added, and the structure was converted into a movie theatre. Later changes include

the conversion of this theatre into a commercial block and the demolition of the rear part of the building, leaving essentially an early 20th-century building. As an early 20th-century presence on the street, this building is similar in scale and detailing with adjacent structures.

- 128-130 **Mathewson Street Methodist Church (1895, 1951):** Cutting, Carleton and Cutting, architects; Arland A. Dirlam, architect for 1951 alterations. 4-story, stone-sheathed, steel-frame structure with 4-bay facade with lancet windows and off-center entrance on first story; stringcourse above first story and colossal Corinthian pilasters on upper stories separating 2-story round-head windows; short segmental-arch windows in attic story; handsome Neo-Gothic interiors. Mathewson Street Methodist Church was organized in 1848 and erected its first building on this site in 1851. That structure was replaced by the present one in 1895. No doubt the church originally served the large residential neighborhood west of Dorrance Street; unlike many other churches once in the vicinity, Mathewson Street Methodist Church has been able to survive the migration of its congregation to neighborhoods beyond its immediate area. It is one of the few churches in Providence that does not rely upon traditional ecclesiastical types for their form. By the time this structure was erected, Mathewson Street was rapidly developing as a commercial area, and surrounding land use militated against a traditional church form; consequently the church is well integrated into its commercial, early 20th-century setting. Its location near Grace Episcopal Church further contributes to generation of activity in the area during non-business hours.
- 131-135 **Joseph P. Cory Building (1896):** 3-story, stone-and-brick-sheathed building; mid-20th-century plate-glass-and-stucco storefront and 3-bay articulation of upper stories with recessed round-head arches flanking a central projecting metal-clad bay window decorated with engaged colonettes; corbel decorative parapet. Handsome and well detailed, this building was typical of the early 20th-century commercial structures along Mathewson Street. Cory, a jewelry manufacturer, built this, probably as an investment property.
- 139 **Lederer Building (1897):** M. J. Houlihan, builder. 7-story, brick-sheathed building with elaborate 2-story entrance now covered on first story by mid-20th-century stuccoed storefronts; elaborate frieze above second story with 3-bay resolution of upper stories dominated by central projecting bay window with rounded corners; a frieze above the sixth story, elaborately framed tripartite windows on seventh story, and a heavy, boxed, copper modillion cornice supported by console brackets. Since its completion, the Lederer Building has housed the offices of a number of small businesses, primarily tailors, dressmakers, milliners, and hairdressers. It is a well designed commercial structure with fine detailing. Taller than the buildings flanking it on Mathewson Street,

its articulation is similar in scale to these buildings, and its height is well integrated with nearby taller structures at Westminster Street, such as the Lapham Building and the Grace Church steeple.

- 158-172 **Lapham Building (1904):** Hoppin and Ely, architect. 9-story, L-shape-plan, brick-sheathed building with 2-story entrances on both Mathewson and Westminster Streets framed by decorative pilasters (now covered on first story by mid-20th-century storefronts); decorative frieze shared with Tilden-Thurber Building (which occupies inside corner of the "L") above second floor; terra cotta-decorated pier-and-spandrel system, third through ninth stories; elaborate frieze above eighth story, elaborate bracketed cornice. This office building, built by the heirs of Benjamin N. Lapham, is an integral part of the cluster of high-style commercial structures in the Westminster-Mathewson Street area.
- 174 **Commercial Building (ca 1910-1920):** 1-story, wood-frame structure with double door occupying narrow width of building. Squeezed between two commercial structures, this tiny store is scarcely noticeable, but its presence adds an *ad hoc* charm to the streetscape.
- 175\* **Grace Episcopal Church (1845-46, 1912, 1970):** Richard Upjohn, architect. Gothic Revival brownstone building with corner tower; gable roof set end to Westminster Street over nave with flanking shed roofs over aisles; center entrance on Westminster Street flanked by lancet windows with hood molds, lancet windows on corner tower, symmetrical buttressing on sides between lancet windows; handsome Gothic Revival interiors with sympathetic alterations; Gothic Revival Parish House (1912, Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson, architects) at rear. Designed by the pre-eminent ecclesiastical architect in America at the time, Grace Church was built in 1846 primarily to serve the well-to-do neighborhood then thriving in the area. Though the neighborhood began to change during the westward expansion of commercial activity following the Civil War, the church has remained an active parish, the traditional low Episcopal Church for East Side residents. The first asymmetrical Gothic Revival church in America and designed by a nationally prominent architect, Grace Church is a major downtown landmark and adds vital contrast to the streetscape.
- 176-178 **Commercial Building (ca 1875):** 2-story, brick-sheathed structure with mid-20th-century plate-glass storefronts and three paired sash windows with transoms evenly spaced on second story; simple wooden box cornice.
- 182-190 **Commercial Building (ca 1885):** 2½-story, wood-frame building with mansard roof; mid-20th-century metal-and-plate-glass storefronts, first story; five bays of three sash windows each on second story and dormers in roof; boxed

wooden cornice with frieze below. This building, typical of the domestic-scale commercial structures that first invaded the residential neighborhoods downtown in the late 19th century, is one of the few remaining structures that illustrate this transitional form.

- 183-189 **Winslow Building (1912):** 3-story brick-sheathed structure with original cast-iron and glass storefronts and three tripartite and projecting bay windows on upper stories; modillion cornice; original, modest interior spaces. The Winslow Building continues to house small retail enterprises and offices. This vernacular commercial structure, in almost original condition, is typical of the many buildings that contribute to the definition and continuity of the downtown as a late 19th- early 20th-century commercial district.

## MEMORIAL SQUARE

**World War I Memorial (1929):** Paul P. Cret, architect; C. P. Jennewein, sculptor. 100-foot, fluted granite shaft with low-relief frieze around lower portion, crowned by heroic figure. In the 1920s many proposals were suggested to commemorate the men of Providence who gave their lives during the World War. After a general competition, the City Council in 1926 approved this monument, designed by a major American architect, for what was then known as Post Office Square, which had been created by the final covering over of the Providence River in 1908. Following the dedication of the monument on 11 November 1929, the area was renamed Memorial Square. The construction of this monument has given definition to this open space between the buildings on Kennedy Plaza and those at the foot of College Hill east of the river. Located at the interface between Downtown and the East Side, Memorial Square provides a space of suitable monumentality as a transition into Kennedy Plaza.

## ORANGE STREET

- 62-66 **Adlers (ca 1922):** 3-story, brick-sheathed structure with metal-and-glass storefront; three Chicago windows and 1 sash window per story above; simple band cornice.
- 72-78 **Commercial Building (ca 1870):** 3-story, stuccoed masonry building with a flat roof; two doors evenly spaced between three windows on first story; and three evenly spaced windows on upper stories; simple wood boxed cornice. The only remaining physical evidence of 19th-century commercial activity in this block, this structure has been heavily altered several times in this century.
- 112-116 **Sadie's Lunch (ca 1880):** 3-story brick-and-masonry structure with mid-20th-century brick-and-plate-glass storefronts; and 5-bay facade on upper stories. Built for industrial use, the building is now mixed commercial-residential. For years it has housed a lunchroom with a large clientele among Downtown businessmen.

## PECK STREET

- 11-17 **Commercial Building (ca 1890):** 2-story brick building with mid-20th-century storefront and 2nd-story bay window flanked by jalousie windows; simple band cornice.
- 19-33 **Colorlab (ca 1900):** 5-story masonry structure with stone trim; original slightly altered storefronts on Pine Street elevation and at northern end of Peck Street elevation; regularly spaced sash windows (three on Pine Street, ten on Peck Street) on upper stories, corbeled brick cornice. Built for light industrial use, this building is now used for commercial space. A simple, well proportioned building, it is a major contributor to streetscape continuity, with a handsomely rehabilitated storefront highlighting its first story.
- 49 **Reprostat (ca 1870):** 2-story masonry structure with low gable roof set end to the street; mid-20th century storefront; five evenly spaced windows on second story. A horse-blanket factory in 1874, this structure has served a number of light industrial and commercial enterprises during its history.

## PINE STREET

- 59-61 **Commercial Block (ca 1920):** 3-story, brick-sheathed structure with truncated corner; contemporary anodized-metal-and-plate-glass storefronts, regularly spaced paired and tripartite windows on second and third stories of Pine and Orange Street elevations; simple band cornice. Recently refurbished to serve as office space, this structure was probably first used as a warehouse or light-industrial building.
- 52-60 **Hanley Building (ca 1910):** William R. Walker and Son, architect. 6-story, brick-sheathed building with truncated corners; slightly altered original wood-and-plate-glass storefronts; upper stories articulated by pier-and-spandrel system with piers culminating in round-head arches above sixth floor; heavy classicizing boxed metal cornice. Built by James Hanley, who operated a brewery, as an investment property housing light industry, this structure first housed a gold-leaf manufacturer, a dye-stuff company, a book-binder, a printer, and an electric supply company. It was converted to commercial space with the de-industrialization of this area in the mid-20th century.
- 62-74 **Edward L. Aldrich Building (1883):** 5-story masonry structure with slightly altered original wood-and-plate-glass storefronts, sixteen evenly spaced sash windows with granite lintels on each of upper stories, and a boxed wooden cornice. Built by Aldrich at a cost of \$40,000 and apparently first used as a wholesale grocery store, the building has, like others adjacent, become integrated into the expanding commercial and financial part of the downtown following the decline of shipping, wholesale trade, and light industry in the immediate vicinity. It is a simple and well proportioned structure.

- 158 **Metcalf Warehouse (1896):** 5-story, brick building with cast-iron storefronts, pier-and-spandrel articulation of upper stories; corbel cornice. Built and owned by Gustav Raedeke and his father-in-law, Jesse Metcalf, owner of the Wanskuck Company (manufacturers of worsted goods from the 1860s to the 1950s), this handsome structure was an investment property for Metcalf family members and housed a number of small jewelry manufacturers.
- 185-191 **Boston Radiator Works (ca 1925 et seq.):** 2-story brick building with 1-story garage addition; mid-20th-century storefront; simple band cornice. This automobile repair shop, its grounds filled with partially dismembered vehicles, typifies the transition of land use along Pine Street from the commercial business district to what until recently was more prevalent industrial use to the south.
- 182 **Commercial Building, now School One (ca 1925):** 2-story masonry structure with a flat roof behind a parapet wall; irregular fenestration of first story and blocked-off regular fenestration above. Rehabilitated for educational use, this former garage is a heavily altered example of the type of structure erected for automobile maintenance in the 1920s.
- 198 **CSA Motor Pool (1966):** 1-story, prefabricated, aluminum building with a flank-gable roof. This government-built structure is typical of the quick, inexpensive, utilitarian structures that have proliferated in the last twenty years. Demanding little expertise for construction, they are mostly used for industrial facilities. The Motor Pool Building provides an interesting contrast in design with the building nearby at 182 Pine Street (q.v.), also constructed to service automobiles.
- 262 **Greek Orthodox Church (1920):** Brick church structure on a high basement with an end-gable roof and paired corner towers with round, arcuated belfries; broad, pedimented entrance portico. This church was erected in the middle of what in 1920 was a residential neighborhood heavily populated by Greek immigrants. Expanding commercial and industrial pressure, interstate highway construction, and urban renewal have dispersed the former residents of this neighborhood, leaving this neighborhood church isolated in an urban commercial setting. Acquired by the State of Rhode Island in 1961, it has belonged to Johnson and Wales College since 1977.
- 266 **House (ca 1845):** Greek Revival; 2½-story wood-frame structure on a high granite basement and with an end-gable roof; 3-bay facade with side-hall plan and Doric entrance portico. Typical of the single-family dwellings that proliferated in the city during the 1840s, this remarkably little-altered house is the only wood-frame dwelling left in Downtown Providence, though similar structures remain farther west on Pine Street beyond I-95.

- 274 **D. M. Watkins Company Building (ca 1921):** 2-story masonry structure with a 9-bay, pier-and-spandrel articulation of facade with metal-sash windows and corbel cornice. Erected for a jewelry manufacturing company — like so many structures in this area — this is a handsome example of small-scale 1920s industrial architecture.

### RICHMOND STREET

- 35-37 **Commercial Building (ca 1925):** 2-story brick building with a mid-20th-century plate-glass storefront; four pilasters on second story defining three bays of large windows with transom lights; simple frieze cornice below a parapet.
- 45 **Sherwood Block (1915):** 5-story brick building with mid-20th-century, wood-sheathed storefronts and evenly spaced, paired sash windows under segmental-arch lintels on the upper stories (six on Richmond Street, eight on Pine Street); no cornice. The Sherwood Block is a blander version of the many buildings of this type and age built along and south of Pine Street. It has housed small retail enterprises since its construction.
- 69 **Rosemac Building (ca 1925):** 3-story masonry structure with a flat roof behind a parapet; original storefronts slightly altered, regular fenestration on upper stories with six bays of Chicago windows on each story. A typical 1920s commercial building, this structure continues in its original retail use.
- 81 **Commercial Building (ca 1925):** 3-story masonry structure with original storefronts slightly altered; regular fenestration on upper stories with four bays of Chicago windows on each story. Almost identical to the adjacent building at number 69, this building also has a similar history.
- 84 **Industrial Building (ca 1925):** 2-story brick building with flat roof behind simple band cornice and parapet; blocked down storefronts on facade, grouped windows on second story. This structure has housed a variety of industrial and commercial enterprises since its construction.
- 85 **Commercial Building (early 19th century (?) ca 1925):** 2-story brick building with flat roof and monitor behind parapet; regular fenestration of Chicago windows on both stories separated by a stringcourse. This appears to be a commercial building which has absorbed an earlier dwelling; the monitor top suggests a prevalent Providence domestic form, and the area was heavily residential in its early history. A dwelling was on this site throughout the 19th century.
- 101 **Morris' Clothes Shop (ca 1920):** 2-story brick structure with flat roof behind a parapet; slightly altered storefronts, regularly spaced paired and Chicago windows on second story. The men's clothing store on the first floor has been a

lifelong tenant of the building.

### SABIN STREET

Established between 1803 and 1823, Sabin Street was named after the family that occupied the land it crosses during the eighteenth century. The Sabin Family owned a large parcel extending from the Great Salt Cove — now the intersection of Sabin and West Exchange Streets — to Dean Street.

- 1-27 **Bonanza Bus Terminal (1963 et seq.):** Philemon E. Sturges, III, architect. 1- and 2-story brick building with flat roofs; exterior articulated by semicircular end walls repeated throughout the buildings of the complex. Built as a recommendation of the 1959 Master Plan, *Downtown Providence 1970*, the bus terminal is one of the most handsome complexes erected as part of urban renewal in the 1960s: it is particularly well suited to its site and lends an urbane note to the streetscape. Located near the railroad station and the intra-city bus terminal at Kennedy Plaza, the bus terminal provides a significant transportation link in Downtown Providence.

### SNOW STREET

- 15-25 **Columbia Building (1897):** Fred E. Field, architect. 4-story brick structure with mid-20th-century storefronts, 4-bay articulation of second and third stories with 2-story bay windows; four small rectangular windows over each bay window on fourth story; boxed cornice with elaborate frieze and balustrade. The Columbia Building continues in its original use as a commercial block. It is one of the many fine vernacular commercial buildings erected downtown around the turn-of-the-century.
- 119-125 **Snow Street Garage (ca 1925):** 4-story, brick-sheathed structure with pier-and-spandrel articulation of walls with louver windows. This building is one of the oldest automobile parking garages Downtown. These early garages provided automobile service as well as parking for the private automobiles which were growing in number following World War I.

### UNION STREET

In 1772, Union Street was only one block long, from Westminster to Weybosset Street. Soon after Rhode Island's rather delayed ratification of the United States Constitution, the street was renamed to honor the unification of the thirteen colonies. By 1803, the street extended as far north as Sabin Street. Union Street was the first street in Providence to be paved with asphalt, in 1891.

- 110-116 **Providence Telephone Company Building (1893, 1906):** Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architects; Norcross Brothers (Worcester), builder. 6-story, brick-and-terra-cotta-sheathed

structure with mid-20th-century storefront; upper stories resolved into three large and two narrow bays dominated by colossal Corinthian pilasters and a highly plastic decorative wall treatment with rustication and terra-cotta friezes and panels; heavy stringcourses above first, second, fifth, and sixth stories. Probably the earliest example in Providence of the fully developed exuberance of the influence of Paris' Ecole des Beaux-Arts, the Telephone Company Building was illustrated in the prestigious trade journal *American Architect and Building News* on 16 September 1893. Evidence indicates that only the first three stories were completed in 1893, and the rest were added in 1906. The Telephone Company, established in Providence in 1879, grew rapidly from its beginnings. This growth rendered the Union Street headquarters obsolete within twenty years, and the company moved to its present headquarters on Washington Street — now doubled in size — in 1917. This structure has been used for office space since then. The Telephone Company Building is a handsome yet little-known example of the virtuosity of the Stone, Carpenter and Willson firm.

### WASHINGTON STREET

One of the later established main thoroughfares Downtown, Washington Street was no doubt named for this country's first President, like many streets, businesses, and institutions established during the years immediately following his death in 1799. By 1803, it extended only as far west as Aborn Street, but during the following twenty years it was opened all the way to Dean Street on Federal Hill. In 1858 it reached its present western terminus at Knight Street.

- 38-52 **Slade's Building (1881):** High Victorian Gothic; 5-story, stone-trimmed, brick building with mid-20th-century storefronts; original plate-glass display windows, second floor; regularly spaced sash windows, upper stories; stringcourses between stories; projecting corner tower of bay windows topped with short spire; boxed decorative cornice. One of the first — and now oldest extant — office buildings on Washington Street, Slade's Building was erected at a cost of \$20,000 at this prominent location only three years after the completion of Providence City Hall, immediately to its east. It is one of the best High Victorian commercial blocks in Providence. For a number of years it housed Westcott, Slade and Balcom, paint purveyors, a firm partially owned by George Slade, who built this block. It is highly visible as the easternmost office structure on Washington Street and of historical importance as one of the earliest offices erected on this then primarily residential street. Its rehabilitation in the early 1980s should assure its utility as its second century begins.

- 56-70 **Earle Building (1895):** 3½-story, brick building with mansard roof and mid-20th-century storefronts; alternating sash and

- bay windows on second and third stories in an irregular pattern; decorative lintels over windows; windows in mansard repeat same pattern; boxed, bracketed cornice with decorative frieze. The Earle Building illustrates the longevity of the mansard roof for commercial buildings; popularized as a chief component of the Second Empire Style in the 1860s, it survived almost to the turn-of-the-century, long after the Second Empire Style had been supplanted. William H. Earle erected this structure in 1895 to house his business, Earle and Prew, General Express Forwarders. Earle and Prew dealt exclusively with at least half a dozen local train and steamship lines, and remained in this location well into the 20th century. Like other commercial buildings, this one provided stores on the first story below upstairs offices.
- 85 **Strand Theatre (1916):** Thomas J. Hill Pierce, architect. 3-story, brick-and-stone sheathed, steel-frame building with late 20th-century storefronts; Corinthian pilasters on upper stories; decorative parapet. This motion-picture theatre was in continuous operation from 1916 until 1978. Like several other motion-picture theatres built Downtown in the early 20th century, the Strand provided for office space in the front part of the building, both enhancing the building's income by optimizing rental space and providing something of a buffer between the street and the auditorium. Of the eight theatres constructed Downtown between 1910 and 1930, only the Strand, the nearby Schubert's Majestic (now the Lederer), and Loew's State (now the Ocean State Performing Arts Center) remain. In 1978, the building was remodeled to provide commercial space in the old auditorium, and the accretion of mid-20th century storefronts was replaced by a simple, more uniform treatment. The Strand is still an integral and important part of the Washington Street streetscape.
- 93-115 **Commercial Block (ca 1927):** 1-story brick building with mid-20th-century plate-glass, aluminum, and enamel storefronts below large stucco cove cornice. Reduced from several stories to one in the mid-20th century and the original storefronts replaced by the current kaleidoscopic array, this building now appears to be a mid-20th-century structure.
- 94-110 **George C. Arnold Building (1923):** 3-story, brick-sheathed structure with mid-20th-century storefronts; 7-bay pier-and-spandrel system on upper stories with Chicago windows and decorative metal spandrels; decorative boxed copper cornice supported by consoles. Erected by a real-estate developer whose house still stands in Elmwood at 238 Adelaide Avenue, the George C. Arnold Building is a handsome structure typical of the low-rise structures built in the area during the years following the Great War. Only 12½-feet deep, the George C. Arnold Building is the narrowest office building Downtown. Arnold apparently built this narrow structure after he discovered the building to its rear on Mathewson Street occupied a small portion of Arnold property — thus this building uses the infringing portion of the adjacent structure as its rear wall. The Arnold family, which still owns this structure and the one at 120-130 Washington Street (just across Mathewson Street), has held property in this area since at least the middle of the 19th century.
- 120-130 **Arnold Building (1896, 1930s):** Clifton A. Hall, architect; 1896. 3-story, yellow-brick-sheathed structure with two sections. Washington Street portion has mid-20th-century storefronts, and its upper stories are articulated by slightly irregular alternation of paired segmental-arch sash windows and prismatic bay windows with elaborately patterned brick diaperwork panels and a corbel parapet cornice. The Mathewson Street addition also has modern storefronts, but its upper stories are filled with regularly spaced sash windows. The original structure was built by William Rhodes Arnold, father of George C. Arnold (see 94-110 Washington Street); his grandson added the portion on Mathewson Street in the 1930s, and it remains in Arnold family ownership today. Similar in scale to nearby structures, the Arnold Building, with its richly textured brickwork and many bay windows, adds variety to the streetscape. The length of ownership by one family is unusual today in Downtown Providence.
- 119 **Hotel Dreyfus (ca 1890; 1917):** Original architect unknown; William R. Walker and Son, architects for renovation. 4-story brick-and-stone sheathing with a flat roof; rusticated brick first story; glazed terra-cotta frieze separating first and second stories; upper stories articulated by regularly spaced 3-story arches surrounding windows; decorative, glazed-terra-cotta spandrels between windows; elaborate frieze below heavy bracketed cornice. A handsome paneled bar and restaurant remains on the ground floor. The Hotel Dreyfus was a successful hotel with a popular cafe when it was completely remodeled in 1917 better to accommodate patrons in the growing theatre district. Unaltered since its 1917 remodeling, the Dreyfus is a handsome, vital part of the Washington Street streetscape.
- 125-137 **Mercantile Block (1901):** 4-story brick building with a flat roof; aluminum-sided, mid-20th-century storefronts and pier-and-spandrel articulation of facade on upper stories; stone-capped brick parapet above fourth story. This commercial block contributes both historically and visually to the creation of the present Washington Streetscape: as one of the earliest commercial blocks in this part of Washington Street, it established the building type used in later blocks along the street.
- 132-150 **Siegal Building (ca 1928):** 4-story, brick-and-steel building with mid-20th-century storefronts with aluminum siding between first and second stories; ten bay pier-and-spandrel facade on upper stories; parapet trimmed with stone. The Siegal Building completed the commercialization of Washington Street in the central business district. Erected by Max Siegal, founder of City Hall Hardware, for many years the structure's major tenant, the Siegal Building is a typical 1920s commercial building. A larger and simpler version of the type built at 94-110 Washington, the Siegal Building is a good background structure compatible with its neighbors.
- 143-149 **Commercial Block (ca 1920):** 3-story brick building with slightly altered 1920s storefronts; seven evenly spaced sash windows on second and third stories; brick parapet above third story. Similar to the Mercantile Block immediately adjacent, this building maintains the existing streetscape and contributes to its visual continuity.
- 165 **Majestic Shoppers Parkade (1964):** Ramp Engineering Company, builders. 3-story reinforced-concrete structure with concrete pier walls with glazed-brick and metal-panel infill. Recommended by the 1960 plan, *Downtown Providence*, 1970, the Majestic garage, taking its name from the adjacent theatre, is typical of the parking structures erected here and elsewhere in the 1960s.
- 184 **First Bank and Trust Company (1972):** William Blume, architect. 2-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure; 1-story drive-through wing; brick walls with concrete panels over the entrance and the first-story plate-glass windows. Smaller but more massively scaled than adjacent buildings, this design is more appropriate to a suburban setting than to downtown.
- 194-200 **Albert Harkness Estate Building (ca 1906):** Martin and Hall, architect. 4-story stone-and-brick building with miscellaneous mid-20th-century storefronts including the sympathetically designed corner restaurant; pier-and-spandrel articulation of second and third stories, culminating in segmental arches above third story; resolved into four bays of Chicago windows on Washington Street and seven bays on Aborn Street; two sash windows above each bay on fourth floor; wide entablature and heavy bracketed cornice. Typical of turn-of-the-century commercial buildings in Providence, the Harkness Estate Building is a well proportioned and well detailed example and adds to the visual quality of the Washington Street streetscape.
- 197-203\* **Majestic Theatre, now the Lederer Theatre (1917):** William R. Walker and Son, architects. 4½-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with truncated corners on Washington Street facade; restored original storefronts and simple modern entrance on the first story; fine terra-cotta facade dominated by ornate triumphal-arch motif flanked by three bays of single-sash windows; full cornice and attic; sides and rear of the building are brick clad with little articula-

tion; elaborately detailed lobby spaces restored; newly constructed stages and auditoriums. Built as a motion picture theatre, the Majestic continued to show films until the early 1970s, when it was converted to space for live theatre, housing Providence's nationally prominent Trinity Square Repertory Company. One of the few remaining pre-1930 motion-picture theatres Downtown (another being the recently refurbished Ocean State Performing Arts Center, now also converted to house live performances), the Majestic is once again a cultural focus in Providence in its new incarnation.

202-  
206 **Packard Motor Car Showroom, now the Foxy Lady (1912):** Albert Kahn (Detroit), architect. 2-story, glazed-polychrome-terra-cotta-sheathed building with truncated corner; mid-20th-century storefronts, Chicago windows on upper story; ornate parapet. This building was constructed to house a Packard Motor Car dealership, one of the first such enterprises Downtown. It is almost certainly the building Kahn is known to have built for the Packard Motor Car Company in Providence. Kahn, a nationally prominent early 20th-century architect, employed some of the most technologically advanced techniques of his day, including the first reinforced-concrete structure, erected as a Packard factory in Detroit in 1910. His work in Rhode Island includes the Providence *Journal* Building and extensive building at the Naval Air Station at Quonset Point. The Packard Showroom is the earliest and most handsome of the 2-story commercial structures in the Washington-Empire area. It is one of the few small buildings of the period that is so richly detailed, owing, no doubt, to the prestigious image of the Packard Motor Car Company. Its terra-cotta ornamentation is akin to that of the Majestic Theatre to the north on Washington Street, and together they make an effective frame for the intersection.

234 **New England Telephone and Telegraph Building (1917, 1971):** Clarke and Howe, architects; Ekman Associates, architects for 1971 addition. 1917 structure: Georgian Revival 8-story, stone-and-brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with marble-sheathed, arched first two stories; regularly spaced, stone-lintel windows on upper stories with stringcourses above third and seventh stories; elaborate cornice and small ogival gable on facade. 1971: 10-story, brick-sheathed, curtain-wall steel-frame building with vertical window strips with spandrels between fixed-pane windows on lower stories, narrow vertical windows closely serried on upper two stories. The original building was erected to accommodate the Telephone Company as it outgrew its earlier facilities on Union Street. Expansion during this century led to the construction of the modern southern wing in 1971. The 1917 structure, though large in scale, is handsomely detailed, and relates well to the Beaux-Arts Providence Public Library across Washington Street. It is a typical example of Clarke and Howe's

work and the most monumental Georgian Revival structure Downtown. In one sense, it is anticipatory of the more formal examples of Post-Modernist architecture, notably Philip Johnson's American Telephone and Telegraph Building on Madison Avenue in New York. The 1971 addition is less felicitous; not only is its stark wall treatment insensitive to the earlier structure, but also the scale of the whole complex is overwhelming for the site, especially in juxtaposition with the open space and small-scale buildings along its eastern side on Empire Street.

250\* **First Universalist Church (1872):** Edwin L. Howland, architect. High Victorian Gothic brick-and-stone structure on high basement with corner tower and spire, cross-gable slate roof; simple exterior articulation includes vestigial buttresses on side walls; stone stringcourses; regularly spaced ogival-arch windows with polychrome stone radiating voussoirs; cruciform-plan auditorium is simple, with dark wood wainscoting, plain plastered walls, clustered colonnettes with foliated capitals, Eastlake Gothic furnishings, and handsome stained-glass windows. A handsome example of post-Civil War ecclesiastical architecture, the First Universalist Church is, like the other remaining churches Downtown, a remnant of the 19th-century, upper-middle-class residential neighborhood in this area. The First Universalist Society of Providence, founded in 1821, occupied two successive structures at the corner of Westminster and Union Streets until expanding mercantile pressure made that location more desirable for commercial activity, and the society moved to this location.

254 **Young Women's Christian Association Building, now 1890 House (1905-1906):** Hoppin & Ely, architect. 6-story, iron-and-steel-frame structure set on a high basement with regular fenestration and bold, decorative cornice. Built through community pledges to replace smaller, crowded facilities on Washington and Franklin Streets, the YWCA Building was begun early in 1905; it was dedicated 3 December 1906. It continued to house YWCA activities until the mid-1970s, when Midland Housing Specialists converted the building into housing for the elderly. The YWCA Building is typical of simpler turn-of-the-century Downtown structures. Though not lavishly detailed, it achieves a monumental presence through the straightforward articulation of its well proportioned masonry walls.

#### WEST EXCHANGE STREET

124-  
130 **Belcher & Loomis Building (1927):** 4-story, brick-and-concrete structure with a flat roof surmounted by a 1-story penthouse; pier-and-spandrel articulation of exterior walls with infill of sash windows. Built by a hardware company in a style typical of 1920s industrial buildings, the Belcher & Loomis Building partakes of the simplest forms of the Art Deco movement. The building has been variously used as

industrial and warehouse space since the 1940s and now houses a television station.

#### WESTMINSTER STREET

Settlement on the west side of the Providence River, which had begun in earnest with the establishment of the New Light Meeting House on western Weybosset Street in 1746, was encouraged by the opening of the Mathewson Farm (bounded by Washington, Weybosset, and Clemence Streets and Cathedral Square) for development in 1750. To improve access to this part of town, the Reverend Joseph Snow. Jr induced the owners of this land to donate portions of their holdings for a new street from Turk's Head to Cathedral Square. The street was named Westminster, after the town in England which under the influence of George Fox, founder of the Society of Friends, had become a center of liberal politics and opinions. The choice of this name reflects the separatist sentiments of area residents in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, when many of them wanted to have the land west of the Providence River set off as a separate town, known as Westminster, divorced from the "despotic rule" of Providence by those dwelling on the Neck, as the East Side was then known. By 1753, Westminster Street had been built as far west as Dorrance Street, then Muddy Dock Creek. A lottery was raised in 1763 to elevate and grade the street farther west, and by the end of the decade Westminster Street extended to present-day Cathedral Square. By 1772, the road connected Market Square on the east with Olneyville on the west; it was then known as Market Street from Market House to Turk's Head, as Westminster Street from Turk's Head to Cathedral Square, and as High Street from Cathedral Square to Olneyville. By 1827, Westminster Street was heavily built as far west as Aborn Street. The final adjustment of its name was made in 1893, when it became Westminster Street for its entire length. The portion from Dorrance to Snow Street was closed to traffic in 1964 with the creation of Westminster Mall, one of the early downtown pedestrian malls built in this country.

15\* **Hospital Trust Building (1919):** York and Sawyer of New York, architect. 11-story, stone-sheathed, steel-frame structure with U-shape plan and articulated in the base-shaft-capital format characteristic of early 20th-century tall buildings; smooth ashlar first story with imposing entrance porticoes, arched windows, and Corinthian pilasters surmounted by entablature with decorative frieze and modillions; "attic" second story with pilasters and stringcourse-entablature above; smooth ashlar punctuated only by pairs of regularly spaced windows on third through ninth stories; simple stringcourse above ninth story; regularly spaced single windows separated by 2-story Ionic pilasters on tenth and eleventh stories; full entablature and classically derived balustrade above eleventh story; much of original interior detailing remains, including the lavish banking hall and

- lobby. The building is connected on its west side with a modern 30-story tower built in 1974. Founded in 1867 to finance Rhode Island Hospital, the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company soon became a commercial banking institution as well, the first trust company in New England. In 1891, the company moved into a 6-story Romanesque structure at 15 Westminster Street, which was demolished for the construction of the present structure. In 1974, the company further expanded into the adjoining 30-story tower to the west. The Hospital Trust Building is a key landmark on lower Westminster Street because of its high architectural quality and as an important institution in Providence's financial district.
- 20\* **Merchants Bank Building (1857):** Alpheus C. Morse and Clifton A. Hall, architects. Italianate, 6-story, brownstone-sheathed, masonry structure with trapezoidal plan; arcaded first story; balustraded second story with tall windows set under alternating triangular and segmental pediments; rectangular, trabeated windows with simple surrounds on third through sixth stories. The home of Merchants Bank from 1857 until its merger with the Providence National Bank in 1920, the building continues to house financial institutions and professional offices. A highly visible landmark Downtown, the Merchants Bank is of prime importance as an early building in the financial district and as the better preserved of the two remaining brownstone Italianate commercial structures Downtown.
- 25 **One Hospital Trust Plaza: Hospital Trust Tower (1974):** John Carl Warnecke and Associates, architect. 30-story, steel-frame tower with glass-and-travertine curtain wall and truncated corners; 2-story piers with plate-glass infill on first and second stories; evenly spaced, fixed-pane windows flush with wall surface on third through twenty-eighth stories; twenty-ninth and thirtieth stories windowless and sheathed in travertine; building connected on its east side with 15 Westminster Street, the 1919 Hospital Trust Building. Built on the site of the Industrial Trust Company Building (1892 remodeling of an earlier structure), this tower was completed to accommodate the expansion of the Rhode Island Hospital Trust Company as well as to provide more Class-A office space in Providence's financial district. The second tallest building Downtown, this monolithic tower dominates the skyline from every direction. The lights that circle the building at its top provide nocturnal identification of this structure in much the same way as the lantern on the nearby Industrial Bank Building.
- 40 **Old Stone Bank Tower (1969):** Shreve, Lamb and Harmon Associates, architect. 23-story, reinforced-concrete tower with marble-sheathed first story and curtain walls of tinted glass recessed in the deep reveals of a concrete-aggregate grid on upper stories. The first modern "high-rise" tower in Downtown Providence, this tower is neither a cohesive composition in itself nor sympathetically scaled to adjacent structures. Since its construction, the building has housed Textron, one of Rhode Island's most important mid-20th-century corporations.
- 59-63 **National Exchange Bank Building (1888):** Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architect. Queen Anne; 4½-story, brick-sheathed, masonry structure with mansard roof (now missing its center tower); mid-20th-century polished grey stone and plate-glass storefront; alternating bay and sash windows on third and fourth stories; alternating single and paired sash windows; fourth floor; heavy dentil cornices. Built to house the expanding National Exchange Bank, the building augmented the structure at 1-15 Exchange Street. The modern storefront, designed by Jackson, Robertson and Adams, was constructed in 1948 for Citizens Bank, which still occupies the ground floor. The Exchange Bank Building, the only fully developed Queen Anne-style commercial building Downtown, is an important part of the history of the financial district. Further, its form recalls the total streetscape of later 19th-century Westminster Street, when almost every building in the block was in an elaborate late Victorian style. Its monumental scale and high-quality details make the National Exchange Bank Building of great importance to Westminster Street and the whole Turk's Head district.
- 75 **Second Wheaton and Anthony Building (1872):** Stone and Carpenter, architect. 5½-story Second Empire, brick-sheathed masonry structure with cast-iron facade; flat roof on east half and mansard roof on west half; 20th-century storefronts; elaborately articulated pier-and-spandrel system above separating large sash windows with patterning in window mullions, boxed cornice. Built as an office building with retail shop space on the ground floor, the Wheaton and Anthony Building housed a number of professionals, the Builders Exchange (a group of contractors), and Tilden-Thurber for many years. An extremely handsome example of later 19th-century commercial architecture, its visual quality is enhanced by its juxtaposition to the National Exchange Bank Building and the streetscape in turn is much enhanced by the Wheaton and Anthony Building.
- 85-89 **Mortgage Guarantee and Trust Company Building (1927):** Jackson, Robertson & Adams, architect. Neo-Federal; 5-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with mid-20th-century storefront, 4-bay wall articulation on upper stories with tall arches over windows on second floor and rectangular windows on third through fifth floors; string-courses between floors; boxed cornice with decorative frieze. Built for Mortgage Guarantee Trust Company, the building continues to house that institution as well as other offices. Like other small early 20th-century buildings in the area, Mortgage Guarantee relies on early 19th-century forms for its architectural character. It is similar in scale to buildings adjacent on Westminster though now somewhat dwarfed by the Industrial National Bank Building to its west.
- 100\* **Providence National Bank Building (1929, 1950):** Howe and Church, architect. Colonial Revival; 3-story, brick-sheathed, structure with flank-gable roof on Westminster facade and flat roof on Weybosset elevation; irregular plan. Westminster facade — three bays with arcaded first story below stone stringcourse; serlian-motif window in center of second story flanked by simple rectangular windows; dentil cornice; three dormers with triangular and segmental-arch pediments, paneled balustrade at crest of roof. Weybosset elevation — five bays with projecting center pavilion; arcaded first story; quoined corners and rectangular windows with splayed keystone lintels on second and third stories; broad entablature; gable end with oval window on center pavilion flanked by balustrade with urns. Built to house the Providence National Bank, formed by the 1920 merger of the Providence National Bank and the Merchants National Bank, the building replaced the Lyceum Building (1858). Through corporate mergers, it devolved first to Union Trust Company and later to the Industrial National Bank following corporate mergers in the 1950s. The building now houses Industrial Bank's Trust Department. Providence National Bank Building is a well designed small building that adds variety to the streetscape through its almost domestic scale; its form and detail evoke the early residential neighborhood in the area.
- 110 **First Federal Savings and Loan Building (1960 remodeling of an earlier structure):** 2-story, steel-and-masonry structure with facade articulated into five bays by anodized aluminum strips with concrete-and-plate-glass infill. This small structure was typical of early 20th-century infill buildings Downtown; its remodeling has, however, obscured its position in an historical context and effectively makes it a mid-20th century building.
- 130\* **The Arcade (1828, 1980):** Russell Warren (Weybosset facade) and James C. Bucklin (Westminster facade), architects; Irving B. Haynes & Associates, architect for remodeling. 3-story granite structure with gable roof; skylight extending the length of the building. Weybosset facade — six Ionic columns *in antis* with full entablature and stepped parapet above. Westminster facade — six Ionic columns *in antis* with full entablature and pediment above. Original interior of three floors of shops with galleries the length of the building at each level. Built by Cyrus Butler and the Arcade Realty Company, the Arcade was the first major commercial venture on the west side of the Providence River. Since its opening, it has housed small retail enterprises and offices. In 1980, the building underwent substantial rehabilitation to improve its economic vitality: Gilbane Company, a major Providence-based building firm, was the

- developer. Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1976, it is one of the finest Greek Revival monuments in this country and has special note as a well preserved and major commercial building; it has no peer in the nation.
- 141-143 **Ming Garden (ca 1870, ca 1910, 1960s):** 2½-story masonry structure with mansard roof; mid-20th-century tile storefront; early 20th-century cast-iron-and-plate-glass second story; boxed cornice; two dormers in roof. The original roof configuration, the turn-of-the-century second story, and the modern first story comprise a layered facade that recounts the history of the changes to this building, which was originally one of several Second Empire commercial structures that lined northern Westminster Street. In the mid-20th century, it was connected with 66-68 Kennedy Plaza as part of the Ming Garden restaurant.
- 136-144 **Lauderdale Building (1894, 1977):** Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architect; Norcross Brothers (Worcester), builder; Michael Ertel, architect for 1977 storefront rehabilitation. 5-story Roman-brick-and-sandstone-sheathed building with terra-cotta trim; recently rehabilitated metal, black-granite, and plate-glass storefront; pier-and-spandrel articulation of upper stories; major horizontal emphases including entablature above first story and stringcourses above second and fourth stories; decorative cornice. Built as an investment property for the Butler-Duncan Land Company (heirs of Cyrus Butler and Alexander Duncan), the Lauderdale Building's design received national attention when it was published by *American Architect and Building News* on 30 June 1894. It continued to function as an office building until cumulative decay necessitated its closing and threatened demolition in 1975. The building was sold at that time to Kates Properties and rehabilitation efforts, including a sympathetic rehabilitation of the storefront, have made the Lauderdale Building an attractive location once again. It is now the headquarters for Kates Properties. One of the finest office buildings Downtown designed by the prominent Providence architectural firm Stone, Carpenter and Willson, the Lauderdale Building helps considerably to make this portion of Westminster Street the most urban — and urbane — in Downtown Providence.
- 146-150 **Francis Building (1894):** Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architect. 5-story, brick-and-stone-sheathed structure with first story colonnaded supporting a heavy entablature; upper stories contain five regularly spaced rectangular windows each; rusticated second story; brick third and fourth stories with decorative panels; brick fifth story; heavy stringcourses above second and fourth stories; bold modillion cornice. The Francis Building was built by Marshall Woods, a Brown University Corporation member, and his wife, Ann Brown Francis Woods, as an investment property. Quite similar to the adjacent Lauderdale Building, the Francis Building is a more elaborately articulated version of the
- same theme with variations thereon developed in both buildings by the same architects. Of outstanding architectural quality, it adds to the coherence of Westminster Street.
- 160-162 **Commercial Block (ca 1870, ca 1940):** 4-story, brick-sheathed, stone-facade building with a poor mid-20th-century storefront; 3-bay facade of metal casement windows on upper stories; arches over 2nd-story windows; stringcourse above third story; simple band cornice. Originally three stories, this brick building had acquired a fourth story by the late 1880s. Since that time, the building has been remodeled several times, its current facade rendered in a classical moderne style. It is an asset to Westminster Street; in type and scale it provides continuity to the streetscape, and its reserved articulation is a foil for its more elaborate neighbors.
- Westminster Mall (1965, 1979):** Pedestrian walkway of concrete and brick with planters, signs, and benches. While a "Westminster Promenade" was first proposed in 1907, the idea for a pedestrian mall was not seriously discussed until the late 1950s. By that time, this major shopping thoroughfare Downtown, the area's narrowest artery, was a traffic nightmare, jammed daily with automobiles and trucks. The decision to build and the actual construction were both hotly contested, but Westminster Mall was finally completed in 1965. During 1977-1979, the mall was redesigned and rebuilt by the city (Malcolm Grear Designers). Westminster Mall has effected few of the changes which its proponents expected of it. Unappealingly designed and ignorant of the urban character of the area, the first mall attempted a suburban character, but it failed to lure shoppers away from shopping malls and back Downtown. The most recent mall reconstruction has focused more on the existing built environment and both current and projected use demands.
- 180-204 **Dorrance Building (1876, 1891):** Geo. Waterman Cady, architect. High Victorian Gothic; 4-story, brick and masonry building; mid-20th-century storefronts; regularly spaced sash windows with pointed, segmental, granite arches and metal bay windows second through fourth stories; boxed decorative cornice. Built to house Jerothmul B. Barnaby's dry goods store, the Dorrance Building was seriously damaged by fire in 1890. Following reconstruction, the store re-opened in the same location in 1891. Following the death of J. B. Barnaby, the store was absorbed by Kennedy's, which continued to sell clothing in the same location until 1978. In 1980, it was recycled to provide restaurant and office space. This handsome Victorian commercial block derives its significance from its high architectural quality; it occupies a key position at Westminster and Dorrance Streets on the eastern end of Westminster Mall, today's retail shopping center downtown, and, further, helped to establish this area as a retail center during the post-Civil War westward expansion of the Downtown.
- 185-178 **Woolworth Building (1922):** 5-story, stone-sheathed, steel-frame structure with mid-20th-century storefronts; pier-and-spandrel wall articulation resolved into three bays on south (Westminster Street) and thirteen bays on east (Dorrance Street) elevation with Chicago-type bay-window infill. Built in 1922 to house the national variety store chain and to provide office space in the upper floors, the Woolworth Building replaced the Hotel Dorrance (1880, Stone and Carpenter, architects); a narrow, 2-story frame building (1855); and the gangway between these two structures. Woolworth's moved into another building farther west on Westminster Street in the 1950s; the ground floor is now occupied by a bank and a specialty shop, but the upper stories are still used as office space. The Woolworth Building is a fine reminder of post-World War I building in Providence. No doubt the construction of the nearby Biltmore Hotel (1920-1922) dealt the *coup de grace* to the Hotel Dorrance, and its location between Providence's retail and financial districts made the site attractive for redevelopment. This structure, similar in scale to nearby buildings, provides continuity to the streetscape while asserting itself as a good example of 1920s commercial style.
- 191 **Kresge Building (1927):** Art Deco; 4-story, limestone-sheathed, steel-frame building with poor mid-20th-century storefront and 5-bay facade with pilaster strips separating vertical casement windows with transoms; decorative trim includes metal panels with Art Deco scrollwork between third and fourth stories, stylized capitals, and chevron designs in parapet; similar, simpler treatment at rear of building on Fulton Street elevation. Like the adjacent Woolworth Building, the Kresge Building was constructed to house a branch of a national variety store chain in the first story and offices above. Kresge no longer maintains a store in Providence, and the first story now houses a franchised dress shop. While the first story has been unsympathetically altered, the upper stories retain the original Art Deco articulation. Art Deco never gained great favor in Providence and little was built during the style's heyday. This building remains as a handsome, though modest, example of that style. Similar in scale to nearby buildings, it is distinguished by its crisp detailing.
- 203-209 **Providence Journal Building (1906):** Peabody and Stearns of Boston, architect. Beaux-Arts; 3½-story, terra cotta-and-brick-sheathed, steel-frame building, now covered by aluminum metal panels over original wall surface; mansard roof; mid-20th-century storefronts, panels covering second and third stories (original articulation included colossal Corinthian pilasters separating pairs of transom windows); heavy projecting cornice; elaborate dormers with console pediments. This structure served as the home of the *Providence Journal* from 1906 until the company moved into its present offices in 1934. The building has been used by various retail stores since then and was most changed

- during the tenure of the J. J. Newbury variety store in the 1950s when the metal sheathing was installed, an alteration consonant with modernization fostered by the *Downtown 1970 Master Plan*. Originally one of the most elaborate Beaux-Arts buildings in Downtown Providence, the *Journal Building* was most unsympathetically altered in a clumsy attempt at modernity. In its original state, the building was a key landmark on Westminster Street. As the original facade remains beneath the metal-paneling, this building is a good candidate for restoration and could once again be a focal point in the streetscape.
- 206-208 **Gaspee Building (1876):** Geo. Waterman Cady, architect. Victorian Gothic; 5-story, brick structure with mid-20th-century storefront; two bays of paired sash windows with polychrome pointed segmental arches separated by bay window on each of upper stories; stepped decorative parapet of granite and brick with window at top center. Built on the site of the Henry T. Root Building (1866, James C. Bucklin, architect) the Gaspee Building rose contemporarily with the Dorrance Building and like the Dorrance Building, the Gaspee Building has functioned continuously as a retail commercial structure. Similar in design to the Dorrance Building, the Gaspee Building is more elaborately articulated. Together the two buildings form make a handsome entrance to the retail shopping area of Westminster Mall.
- 210-216 **William Wilkinson Building (ca 1900):** 5-story, brick-sheathed structure with mid-20th-century plate-glass storefront; novelty brick sheathing over second story; 4-bay articulation on upper stories with paired sash windows in three wide bays on third, three windows per bay on fourth; and four windows per bay on fifth story; broad stringcourse above fourth story; corbel cornice. This commercial structure, similar in scale and massing to adjacent contemporary structures, makes fine use of the "base-shaft-capital" building form then popular in American commercial building. It is well-integrated part of the Westminster Street streetscape.
- 217 **Hannah Greene Estate Building (1879):** 4-story, polychrome-brick building with stone trim and recently rehabilitated cast-iron storefront; 2-bay facade of segmental arches framing paired sash windows; brick stringcourses between stories; corbel cornice; similar articulation on Eddy Street elevation. Built by F. M. Smith, a real estate developer, for the heirs of Hannah Greene as an investment property, this building has always been leased to a tenant rather than housing an owner-occupied business. The Hannah Greene Estate Building contributes significantly to the Westminster Streetscape by its fine proportions and well handled detailing. The rich patterning of the brick was recently exposed by the removal of a monochromatic paint scheme, dramatically emphasizing a previously little-regarded building. It handsomely recalls the westward expansion of commercial structures along Westminster Street.
- 220-226 **O'Gorman Building (1925):** 6-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with mid-20th-century storefronts; large plate-glass windows at second story with terra cotta stringcourse above; upper stories resolved into window bays ornamented at bottom with stylized peacocks whose tails rise 3 stories to fan out at the top of the building. Built as an office building with 1st-floor shops, the O'Gorman Building has housed small commercial concerns and offices since 1925. The building's exuberantly detailed facade adds variety to Westminster Street; its massing helps to define the scale of this block.
- 228-232 **Burgess Building (1870):** Geo. Waterman Cady, architect. 3½-story; stone-trimmed, brick building with mansard roof; late 20th-century storefront; stone walls with quoined corners on upper stories; late 19th-century, 2-story oriel window centered on second and third; sunbonnet gable centered in mansard with two flanking, smaller dormers. Built as an office building with retail facilities in the first story, the building housed Cady's architectural offices for a number of years, and 19th-century tenants included Bryant and Stratton Business College, a piano store, and a millinery shop. Today it houses a discount drug store. One of the earliest — and now oldest surviving — commercial structures on middle Westminster Street, the Burgess Building recalls the post-Civil War westward expansion of the central business district. Now heavily altered, the building's facade is nevertheless quite lively and contributes to the architectural vitality of the streetscape.
- 229 **William H. Low Estate Building (1897):** Martin and Hall, architect. Mid-20th-century storefront, little changed classicizing upper facade has rusticated stone second story with display windows separated by engaged Ionic columns; striated composite pilasters on third through fifth stories; cornice above fifth story; attic with Doric pilasters on sixth story; heavy modillion cornice. Built shortly after the remodeling of the adjacent Boston Store, the Low Building is a subtle variation on the architectural theme established by its neighbor; seldom do competing architectural firms coordinate efforts so readily and so successfully. The William H. Low Estate Building, erected by his heirs, originally housed small tailoring and millinery firms; today Woolworth's occupies the structure.
- 236-250 **Alice Building (1898):** Martin and Hall, architect. 7-story, stone-trimmed, brick building with mid-20th-century storefronts; plate-glass display windows with tripartite transoms on second story; heavy cornice above second story, corner projecting pavilions on third through seventh stories; variety of surface texture on upper stories includes rustication of second and third stories and engaged columns at sixth and seventh stories; interior extensively remodeled on first story; upper stories retain original layout as shopping arcades. The Alice Building was erected as an investment property by rubber magnate Joseph Banigan and named for his daughter, Mrs. James E. Sullivan. While the concept of a large building containing small shops had been realized in the Arcade of 1828, the precedent is without successor Downtown except for the Alice Building and the later Mason Building on Weybosset Street (now altered). A handsome commercial structure and an integral part of the streetscape, the Alice Building is increased in significance by its interior shopping arcade, a use of space completely belied by its standard exterior articulation.
- 239 **Callendar, McAuslan and Troup Store, now Peerless (1873, 1866, 1892):** William R. Walker, architect. 6-story, brick-and-stone building with mid-20th-century, stone-sheathed storefronts; rusticated stone trim on second story; paneled composite pilasters on third through fifth stories; cornice above fifth story; attic with Ionic colonettes and Doric pilasters on sixth story; heavy modillion cornice. Established as a department store — the first of its magnitude in Providence — in 1866. Callendar, McAuslan and Troup first opened in a smaller building on this site. The commercial venture, which soon became known as the Boston Store, was immediately successful and, having outgrown its original facilities, commenced expansion on the site in 1872. This building originally had a cast-iron facade which was removed during the 1892 expansion and remodeling. The Boston Store was bought by Peerless in the early 1950s, and Peerless continues to operate in this location. Peerless is a landmark on Westminster Street, both as the oldest of the large, late 19th-century department stores and because of its high architectural quality. The 1950s renovations are not entirely sympathetic with the elaborate articulation of the upper stories, but the building retains much of its original visual quality.
- 252 **People's Bank (1969):** Robert Hill, architect. 4-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with plate-glass-and-aluminum entrance on Westminster Street and remaining wall of solid brick, diagonally stepped-back wall system with windows on each story on Union Street elevation. This bland building houses a branch of the main bank on Kennedy Plaza as well as bank offices.
- 259\* **Shepard Company Building (1870s, 1880, 1885, 1896, 1903):** Architects of early sections unknown; Martin & Hall, architect for 1903 expansion. Building includes facades of previously existing buildings incorporated in this structure; 5- and 6-story, brick-, stone-, terra cotta-, and stucco-sheathed masonry building with cast-iron supporting members; facades on Westminster and Washington Street with 2-story entrance arches at corners of Union Street and tripartite-transom display windows on two lower stories; entablature above second story with less ornate articulation above modillion cornice on Washington Street

- facade; original interior — tin ceilings, hard wood and terrazzo floors — are partially intact; late 19th-century, cast-iron clock in front of building on Westminster Street. Founded in 1880, the Shepard Company rapidly expanded to become the largest department store in New England by 1903, when it occupied the entire block bounded by Westminster, Union, Washington, and Clemence Streets. The building's physical growth was effected by construction and by acquisition of existing buildings which were subsumed into the present structure. As a "full-service department store," Shepard's remained a Providence shopping institution until the store went bankrupt in early 1974. Long a downtown landmark because of its elegant turn-of-the-century building and its reliable merchandise, the unaltered Shepard Company Building adds continuity and visual delight to its environs.
- 260 **W. T. Grants Building (1949):** Leland and Larson (Boston), architect. 4-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with stone-sheathed first story with plate-glass-and-aluminum display windows and projecting structural canopy; windowless upper stories used as a billboard across which spread the company logo. Built on the site of B. F. Keith's Theatre (Westminster Street) and Low's Grand Opera House (Union Street), the building housed a branch of the Grants variety-store chain until that firm's bankruptcy in 1976. It now houses small retail shops on the first floor.
- 268-272 **Train Building, now Roger Williams Office of Old Colony- Newport National Bank (1893, 1954):** Frank N. Gustavson & Sons, builder for renovations. 5-story, brick-sheathed structure with 1st- and 2nd-story articulation connotatively Colonial through use of 18th-century motifs, including red-brick sheathing with stone trim and a statue of Roger Williams; upper stories resolved into piers connected by round-head arches with bay windows filling these arches; simple sash windows above arches on fifth floor; egg-and-dart cornice. The original structure visible above the second story, built for Alice B. and Elizabeth Train and Annie B. Hale, was a typical 1890s commercial structure; it remained an investment property for these women and their heirs until 1952. The renovation of the lower two stories, while avoiding the *ad hoc* storefront remodelings so common in the area, is nevertheless unsympathetic to the original architectural idiom. It does, however, seek to establish an historical connotation of time and place established by the bank that made the alterations and still occupies the building.
- 275 **Cherry and Webb (1914):** Angell and Swift, architect. 5-story brick building with marble-faced walls and display windows on first story; second through fifth stories articulated with four, 4-story bays capped with segmental arches with tripartite transom window and elaborately detailed metal spandrel infill; large lamps at base of each pier separating bays; ornate bracketed copper cornice. Built on the site of the Trocadero (1891), a restaurant and dancing parlor that was a center of Providence social life in the 1890s and the predecessor of Carr's (the oldest catering firm in New England), the Cherry and Webb Building was occupied by the department store from its construction until 1979. Extremely handsome in its own right, Cherry & Webb's building adds to the architectural and historical continuity of Westminster Street, and evinces the historical role of the street as the major shopping thoroughfare Downtown. It was vacated in early 1979, when the store was moved to Dorrance and Weybosset Streets, by its present owner, the Outlet Company, to a site adjacent to the Outlet Company store. Like its neighbors, the Cherry and Webb Building is a prime candidate for rehabilitation.
- 276-282 **Wit Building (ca 1925):** 2-story masonry structure with plate-glass-and-aluminum storefront and a tile-sheathed upper story used as a background-billboard for a sign for the store. The Wit Building housed a shoe store for many years until its most recent occupant, a women's retail shop, remodeled the facade and moved in during the 1950s. The building was vacated upon the dress shop's closing in 1980.
- 291 **Burrill Building, formerly Gladding's (1891):** Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architect. 5-story brick-and-stone building with flat roof; original cast-iron storefront with display windows slightly altered; 3-bay pier-and-spandrel system with paired double-hung sash windows and filled transoms on second and third stories; three pairs of double-hung sash windows with simple surrounds on fourth story; three pairs of round-head windows on fifth story; bracketed cornice with wide soffit. Founded in 1805 as Watson and Gladding on North Main Street, the Gladding Company was the oldest dry-goods store in Providence when it closed in 1974. Originally located on North Main Street, the enterprise moved to lower Westminster Street in 1878, and, having outgrown those quarters, moved to the Burrill Building upon its completion. In 1976, Johnson and Wales Business College bought the building. It is now converted to classrooms and a women's clothing store used as a merchandising laboratory for Johnson and Wales students. Along with Callendar, McAuslan and Troup, Shepard's, and Cherry and Webb, Gladding's was a major part of the mid-Westminster Street retail shopping block. The well-preserved Burrill Building remains a landmark on Westminster Street.
- 292 **Tilden-Thurber Building (1895):** Shepley, Rutan and Coolidge of Boston, architect. 4-story masonry building with classically inspired detailing including original stone pier-and-spandrel system on first and second stories with plate-glass and metal infill, colossal engaged and rusticated columns and quoined corners on third and fourth stories, broad Ionic entablature and ornate bracketed cornice; handsome, little-altered mahogany-cased interior space. With business antecedents in the 18th century, the present firm of Tilden-Thurber became active as a retailer of silver and jewelry in the Wheaton and Anthony Building in 1880. The enterprise thrived, and in 1895 the store moved to its present quarters. Unaltered and well maintained, the Tilden-Thurber Building is a highlight of Westminster Street.
- 299 **Tillinghast Building (1893, 1959):** 2-story masonry structure with glass-and-aluminum storefront and a windowless stuccoed wall on second story. Lloyd A Tillinghast was a Providence businessman who had formed the L.A. Tillinghast Corporation in 1891 for the operation of a restaurant and dancing parlor, the Trocadero; in 1906, Mr. Tillinghast and his secretary — and by then his wife — Laura M. Carr formed the catering firm that still bears her name. At a cost of \$25,000, Mr. Tillinghast engaged Houlihan and McGuire to build this structure, which was one of several he owned in the area. Originally five stories high and similar to the nearby Lederer and Lapham Buildings, the Tillinghast Building was drastically altered by the removal of the upper three stories and the radical remodeling of the remainder. Ira Rakatansky was the architect who converted this into a "modern" structure consonant with the city's goals established in the 1959 Master Plan.
- 303-305 **Commercial Building (ca 1872):** 4-story masonry building with mid-20th-century aluminum, glass, and ceramic-tile storefront on first and second stories, 3-bay cast-iron facade on third and fourth stories articulated by Romanesque colonettes; heavy stringcourses and bracketed cornice. This commercial building is part of the post-Civil War commercial expansion in Downtown Providence. Its inappropriately altered storefront is typical of mid-20th-century modernizations.
- 307-309 **Commercial Building (ca 1885):** 3-story masonry building with mid-20th-century facade of diverse unrelated elements. Heavily altered, this building is a victim of poorly conceived yet typical mid-20th-century modernization.
- 311-313 **Commercial Building (ca 1930):** 2-story masonry building with mid-1970s wood-and-plate-glass storefront and large plate-glass windows on second story. The architectural integrity of this building has been severely compromised by renovations which attempted to remove its perceived stigma of antiquity in the middle of this century.
- 317-321 **Blackstone Hotel, later Kent Hotel (1911):** Clark, Howe and Homer, architect. 5-story, red-brick-sheathed building with mid-20th-century storefront; 3-bay facade with tripar-

- tite double-hung sash windows with quoin-and-keystone stone surrounds in each bay on second through fifth stories; elaborate stone modillion cornice. A modest hotel until 1976, the Blackstone has since been vacant. A handsome structure despite its modern storefront, it is a highlight of the north side of Westminster Street between Mathewson and Moulton Streets.
- 326-  
342 **Kinsley Building (1912):** Martin & Hall, architect. 5-story, brick-sheathed structure with mid-20th-century storefronts and a pier-and-spandrel system on upper stories with infill of paired sash windows, quoined corners; bracketed cornice. An investment property for the heirs of Sarah E. Cranston and built as an office building with stores on the first story, the Kinsley Building continues to serve its original purpose. The Kinsley Building is a handsome example of the many commercial buildings that rose Downtown between 1890 and 1920. Now somewhat isolated by demolitions on the south side of Westminster Street, the Kinsley Building remains an important structure on upper Westminster Street.
- 327-  
333 **Moulton Building (1889):** 5-story, brick-and-stone building with mid-20th-century storefront; rusticated sandstone pier-and-spandrel wall articulation framing metal sash-and-transom windows on upper stories; corbel cornice. Built on land owned by Marion P. Simmons (the wife of a Providence cotton broker) by the heirs of William H. Low (see 229 Westminster Street), the Moulton Building was part of the Low heirs expanding real-estate holdings Downtown in the late 19th century. It is a bold, simple, late 19th-century office building, a handsome counterpart for the nearby Kinsley Building. Less elaborately detailed than most contemporary Providence office buildings, it derives its high architectural quality from good proportions and well conceived juxtapositions of surface texture.
- 343 **Commercial Building (ca 1928):** 2-story brick-and-glazed-tile building with Art Deco-derived facade detailing with large plate-glass windows on both stories, fictile ceramic mouldings, and decorative polychrome glazed terra cotta panels. The articulation of this building has a lively individuality that makes a virtue out of its incongruity with the whole streetscape and contributes vitality to this part of Westminster Street.
- 358-  
372 **Commercial Block (ca 1960):** 1-story masonry structure with plate-glass and aluminum storefronts and graphics in parapet above. Built around the time of the development of Westminster Mall, this series of storefronts continues to house shops and restaurants. An extremely modest building, similar to the scores of those constructed in this country at suburban shopping centers over the last thirty years, it is out of keeping in an urban context.
- 371-  
391 **Conrad Building (1885):** Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architect. 5-story masonry building with mid-20th-century

storefronts, highly eclectic and imaginative articulation of upper stories with 4-story cast-iron corner tower on the southeast crowned with Moorish ogival dome and fenestration patterns drawn from numerous sources (Venetian Gothic, French, Romanesque). Erected by J. B. Barnaby and named for his son-in-law, the Conrad Building was hailed as the "finest edifice devoted to business" in the city upon its completion. Though originally used for professional offices, the structure, with ample space in its upper floors, has long appealed to students and artists as studio loft space, particularly following the decline in demand for commercial space Downtown. The Conrad Building epitomizes the stylistic eclecticism of Late Victorian commercial buildings in Providence. While other downtown buildings demonstrate a high degree of surface plasticity and exuberant motival juxtapositions, none are so boldly designed as the Conrad Building. The 1st-story alterations, though not entirely in keeping with the articulation of the upper stories, are little removed in spirit from the original 1st-story articulation, which was considerably lighter than that of the rest of the building. The Conrad Building is one of the early buildings erected Downtown purely as an investment of money derived from the prosperity that enriched Providence between the Civil and Great Wars, and its animated exterior typifies the taste of many of those newly monied during that era.

- 400 **Caesar Misch Building (1903):** Martin and Hall, architect. 6-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with Art Deco plate-glass-and-stainless-steel storefront on facade, original cast-iron, 2-story storefront along Empire Street elevation and above renovated Westminster Street storefront; broad elaborate frieze above second story; elaborate stone window surrounds on upper stories; elaborate frieze above fifth story; deep, elaborate entablature below modillion cornice with decorative soffits. Built by Caesar Misch, a clothier and haberdasher, this commercial structure is now an extremely handsome culmination of Westminster Street. It is a well proportioned, well detailed building gracefully accommodated to its sloping site. The Art Deco storefront, added by Harris Fur — the present occupants — in the 1930s is one of the few commercial renovations that, though dissimilar from the rest of the building, has a temporal and artistic integrity which makes it an interesting and significant addition to a good building.

- 444 **Blue Cross Building (1966, 1978):** Fenton Keyes & Associates, architect; Robinson Green Beretta, architect for addition. 3-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with pier-and-spandrel articulation of the first two stories below a more simply finished projecting third story. Built in the Weybosset Hill Redevelopment Area, Blue Cross is a handsome contemporary building. It achieves further visual importance as an effective link between the older part of Downtown east of Empire Street and the predominantly new construction to the west through its siting on the lotline and its lively exterior.

## WEYBOSSET STREET

The oldest thoroughfare traversing Downtown, Weybosset Street was originally part of the Pequot Trail, a long route along the coast used by Indians long before the advent of the first white settlers. Its winding route Downtown recalls the area's original topographical configuration, with a bluff at the route's eastern end, now Turk's Head. This bluff on narrow Weybosset Neck hindered development west of the Providence River during the early years of white settlement, and the town was unable to afford its removal. The leveling of the bluff began in 1724, however, when Thomas Staples received permission from the town to extract the clay in the bluff for brickmaking; refuse earth from the excavation was used to fill the marshy land around Weybosset Neck. The street takes its name from this neck of land, known to the Indians as "Waubosset," meaning "at the narrow passage" and referring to the crossing point or fording place in the Providence River between the east and west sides. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, various portions of the street — particularly from Dorrance to Chestnut Street — were known as Broad Street, but since 1893 the entire length has been Weybosset Street. Until 1964, Weybosset Street curved north to rejoin Westminster Street in front of the Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul, but the western portion was closed by the city to create the Weybosset Hill Redevelopment Project parcel. In 1978, as part of the Westminster Center Project, the portion from Mathewson to Dorrance Street was narrowed to a uniform width, creating the park-like area on the street's north side.

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17\* **Turks Head Building (1913):** Howells and Stokes of New York, architect; Gilbane Company, builders. 17-story, granite-and-brick-sheathed, V-shape, steel-frame structure with arcaded, polished granite base on lower three stories; brick walls above punctuated with regularly spaced rectangular windows in 11-story shaft; square windows on upper stories with paneled interstices; heavy modillion cornice; high-relief sculpture of a Turk's head in frieze above 3rd story. On the site of the Jacob Whitman House (1750), and the Whitman Block (1825), the Turks Head Building was built by Brown Land Company as an investment property for members of the Brown family. It has continuously housed stock brokerages, insurance firms, advertising agencies, professional offices, and a bank since its construction. Important both for its architectural quality and its role in Providence's commercial history, the Turks Head is a key downtown landmark, and dominates the financial district at the intersection of Westminster and Weybosset Streets (known as Turk's Head).
- 10\* **Banigan Building, later Grosvenor Building, now AMICA Building (1896):** Winslow and Wetherell (Boston), architect; Norcross Brothers (Worcester), builder. 10-story, granite-sheathed, steel-frame building; half-story stone basement;

- rusticated first and second stories; smooth wall surface punctuated by evenly spaced recessed windows above second story; stringcourses above second, fifth, and ninth stories; massive copper modillion cornice; original interior including marble wainscoting, elaborate egg-and-dart moldings, and cage elevators. Joseph Banigan, born in Ireland, rose from journeyman in the jewelry industry in 1860 to the largest single importer of rubber products in the country by 1890. A founder of U.S. Rubber Company, he began to invest his considerable fortune in real estate by the mid-1890s. This, his first venture, has been continuously used as an office building since its completion. AMICA, the Providence-based insurance company, acquired the building in 1954 for use as its home office. The Banigan Building was the first tall, fireproof, steel-frame building erected in Providence. The extremely fine rendering of its detailing is typical of the Norcross Brothers firm, then the best builders in the country. Its style and massing established the precedent for other commercial buildings erected in the Turk's Head area during the 20th century.
- 24\* **Federal Building, later Custom House, now John Fogarty Building (1855-1857):** Ammi B. Young, architect. Italianate, 3-story, granite building with cast-iron supporting structure; low hip roof with hemispherical dome at center; 3-bay elevation on east and west sides, 7-bay on north and south sides; arcaded first story; pedimented windows on third story; quoined corners, wide modillion cornice with dentil frieze; interior retains original organization, including third-story courtroom with apsidal niche and the ornamental cast-iron staircase. The hemispherical dome, a highly visible component of this building, was added to the design after construction had begun and bears little relation to the rest of the composition. Built as the first Providence Federal Building, the Custom House originally housed the Federal District Court and Post Office as well as U.S. Customs. Both the court and the post office were removed to the "new" Federal Building at the east end of Kennedy Plaza upon its completion in 1908, and the post office moved to its present location in the Federal Building Annex in 1939. The Customs Agency continues to occupy the building. Ammi B. Young was architect for the Treasury Department in the mid-19th century and designed many Custom Houses and government buildings; this is one of his best, and an outstanding, monumental example of the Italianate style in Providence. It is extremely important Downtown, both as part of the area's historic fabric and as a key visual element in the streetscape.
- 36\* **Equitable Building (1872):** Walker and Gould, architect. High Victorian Gothic, 5-story, masonry-and-cast-iron structure with cast-iron facade; square plan with truncated corner; highly plastic wall articulation with horizontal division between second and third stories below which are engaged columns with foliated capitals on high pedestals and above which are double windows with engaged colonettes; cast-iron boxed cornice with frieze and brackets; interior extensively altered in mid-20th-century. Founded in 1859, the Equitable Fire and Mutual Insurance Company operated from quarters in Market Square until completing this building. The Equitable Building still has an insurance company as its major occupant. One of the first examples of the use of cast-iron construction in Providence, the Equitable Building is part of a core of 19th-century commercial structures that form the Custom House Historic District. The original polychrome exterior paint scheme was recently refurbished, and the building continues to function as an important part of the financial district.
- 42-46\* **Wilcox Building (1875, 1892, 1979):** Edwin L. Howland, architect; alterations by Stone, Carpenter and Willson (1892) and Al Mancino (1979). High Victorian Gothic 5-story Masonry structure with L-shape plan surrounding Equitable Building; asymmetrical facade on Weybosset Street appears almost as two buildings, Custom House Street facade more regular; exterior articulation is a richly elaborated decorative scheme including radiating-vousoir arches over the windows, heavily carved pier and column capitals, fictile stringcourses, and fanciful window caps. Dutee Wilcox came to Providence as an impoverished jeweler's apprentice in the 1850s; by the 1870s, Wilcox owned his own jewelry company and had erected "one of the most magnificent and costly buildings in Rhode Island." The Wilcox Building was continuously used for office and commercial space until it was gutted by fire early in January 1975. Renovation and restoration of the building, aided by city, state, and federal agencies, was carried out in 1977-1979. The high architectural quality of the Wilcox Building is a major contributor to the richness and diversity of lower Weybosset Street.
- 45-53\* **Hall's Building (1876):** High Victorian Gothic, 5-story, stone-trimmed brick structure with an inappropriate mid-20th-century storefront of enamel panels and aluminum window frames; eight symmetrically spaced segmental-arch windows on upper stories; horizontal divisions between each floor formed by connection of lintels, corbel bracketed cornice; interior is heavily altered, but original helical staircase in middle of building connects second through fifth stories. Built by real-estate broker William A. Hall, the building has continuously housed professional offices since 1876, with retail spaces in the first story and basement. Although less pretentious than neighboring contemporary structures, Hall's Building contributes highly to the architectural quality of lower Weybosset Street.
- 48\* **Bank of North America (1856):** Thomas A. Tefft, architect. Italianate, 4-story, brownstone-faced, brick structure with 3-bay facade (20th-century storefront); segmental-arch pediment windows on second story, triangular-pediment windows on third story; and simple trabeated windows on fourth story; quoined corners; heavy modillion cornice; interior heavily altered. The Bank of North America, founded in 1823, used this building from the time of its construction until the corporation was absorbed into the Union Trust Company in 1904. Soon afterward, the building was remodeled for retail business, and the present street-level storefront was constructed. Weiss Stationery has occupied the building for many years. One of two remaining brownstone commercial structures Downtown — the other being Merchant's Bank — the Bank of North America is one of the few surviving buildings by Providence's prominent mid-19th-century architect, Thomas A. Tefft. Commensurate in scale with other structures on lower Weybosset Street, its formal facade is a handsome foil for the more elaborate Equitable and Wilcox Buildings nearby.
- 54-56\* **Old Colony Bank Building (1927):** Thomas M. James Company, architect. Neo-Federal, 11-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with 3-bay facade; 2-story recessed-entrance portico below stone entablature supported by attenuated composite columns; regularly spaced stone-lintel windows above; stone stringcourse above ninth floor; modillion cornice; interior retains original marble-sheathed entrance hall with brass and bronze trim and latticework tile floor. Built for Old Colony Cooperative Bank (which merged with Newport National Bank in the late 1960s), the building has continuously functioned as a bank since its completion. The character and scale of the historical architectural motifs incorporated into the building's design are inappropriate to a building of this sort but represent an aesthetic anomaly typical of many corporate headquarters: the functional demands of a bank's offices require a multiple-story structure, but the nature of the business dictates the use of a traditional decorative vocabulary.
- 55-61\* **Old Stone Bank Trust Department (ca 1945):** Neo-Federal, 3-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with 7-bay facade; stone first story with tall rectangular windows and entrance at eastern end; balustraded round-head windows with blind fans on second story; smaller rectangular windows on third story; simple boxed cornice with parapet above; original Neo-Federal interior. The building houses the Trust Department of Old Stone Bank, its original use. A well proportioned Neo-Federal building, the structure maintains continuity of scale and adds to the architectural diversity of lower Weybosset Street.
- 65 **Arcade (1828):** See 130 Westminster Street.
- 75\* **Atlantic Bank Building (1866):** Elizabethan 3-story brick-and-masonry structure; 3-bay facade of ornately carved puddingstone with round-head windows on each story and corbel stringcourses between stories; ornate bracketed cornice. This building was constructed in 1866 to house the Atlantic Bank. The bank reorganized and moved to larger

- quarters in the Banigan Building in 1906 before closing its doors in 1913. In the 20th century this building housed offices, a photography studio, and — until 1976 — the Rhode Island Bible Society. It has recently undergone exterior restoration and interior rehabilitation to accommodate professional offices. The Atlantic Bank Building recalls the long history of this area as a financial and commercial center. The delicate surface decoration of this small structure provides a fine contrast to Russell Warren's powerfully composed Arcade next door. Its exterior restoration and interior rehabilitation in 1978 for professional offices has brought much-deserved attention to this handsome building.
- 86 **Studley Building (1894):** Geo. Waterman Cady, architect. 6-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with mid-20th-century aluminum-frame-and-plate-glass storefront; paired regularly spaced granite-lintel windows on second through fourth stories, paired round-head windows on fifth story, narrow regularly spaced windows on sixth story; heavy modillion cornice; interior extensively altered in the mid-20th century. Built as an office building — perhaps as an investment — by George H. Darling (principal in T. Curtis & Company, brush makers), the Studley Building is a good example of early 20th-century vernacular commercial architecture.
- 100 **Providence Gas Company Building (1924):** Clarke and Howe, architect. 5-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with "Colonial" detail, including an ogee gable on the Weybosset Streetfront. Clark and Howe's Colonial Revival design not only maintains the continuity of the streetscape quite handsomely, but also, in the use of the ogee gable, makes specific reference to a Providence colonial prototype, the Joseph Brown House at 50 South Main Street, which inspired a number of Colonial Revival buildings throughout the state.
- 123-139 **RZL Realty Company Building (1926):** Angell and Swift, architect. 3-story, brick-and-steel-frame structure with various modern storefronts; 5-bay facade on second and third stories consisting of raised piers and recessed spandrels with triple windows in four westernmost bays and single sash window in eastern bay; stone corbel cornice with parapet above. Built to house, among other enterprises, a Chinese restaurant, the building continues to provide space for small retail shops. A good example of 20th-century vernacular commercial architecture, the building contributes to the visual continuity of the streetscape.
- 122 **Broadcast House (1979):** Providence Partnership, architect. 2- and 3-story, black-granite-sheathed, steel-frame building with irregular massing and irregular fenestration. Broadcast House was constructed by the Outlet Company to house its radio and television stations and Cherry and Webb, a women's clothing store owned by the Outlet Company and located for over sixty years on Westminster Street. This structure represents one of the very few major private investments in new construction Downtown during the 1970s.
- 145 **Commercial Building (ca 1925, 1960s):** 1-story stuccoed masonry structure with truncated corner containing entrance with applied broken-scroll pediment and flanking "carriage lamps"; large plate-glass display windows on Weybosset and Eddy Street elevations; signage dominating the blank wall above fenestration. The building's exterior, altered for a men's clothing store, has the large-scale exterior graphics and simple articulation typical of 1960s storefront design; the "carriage lamps" and the broken-scroll pediment over the door are similarly tied to a connotative message of the traditional, anomalously typical of 1960s retail-establishment renovations.
- 151 **Second Universalist Church (1847-1849):** Thomas A. Tefft, architect. Romanesque Revival, 3½-story, brick structure with end-gable roof; 20th-century storefronts; 2nd-story windows infilled, five round-head windows with vousoirs and connecting imposts on third story, centered round-head window with tracery flanked by two lunette windows below datestone in attic; simple corbel cornice; irregular fenestration on Eddy Street elevation. Built as the Second Universalist Church, the building housed the first private normal school in Providence by 1852, the antecedent of Rhode Island College. The structure was converted to commercial use later in the 19th century and continues thus today. Significant both as one of the few remaining buildings designed by Providence's eminent mid-19th-century architect, Thomas A. Tefft, and as a reminder of the generally residential nature of this part of the downtown before the Civil War, the Second Universalist Church building, though heavily altered both inside and out, adds architectural variety to the streetscape in a block of vernacular buildings.
- 155-159 **Commercial Block (ca 1915):** 3-story stone-and-metal-sheathed building with mid-20th-century aluminum-and-glass storefronts, recessed wall surface with two 2-story Egyptian columns *in antis* separating three Chicago windows on second and third stories, quoined corners; decorative frieze on boxed cornice.
- 165-169 **Mason Building (1903):** Stone, Carpenter and Willson, architect. 6-story, brick-and-metal-sheathed, steel-frame structure with late 20th-century storefront; 4-story, 3-bay articulation of upper stories with three Chicago windows on each story, corbel cornice; modern interiors. Recently rehabilitated, the structure was built by the John N. Mason Real Estate Company and used as a commercial and office space. While more massive than neighboring structures to its east, the Mason Building is similar in style to these commercial structures. It is harmonious in style and scale with the Fletcher Building to its west and the Outlet Company across Weybosset Street.
- 168-176 **Outlet Company Store (1891; 1894; 1903; 1912; 1914; et seq.):** 5-story, steel-frame structure sheathed with white brick and terra cotta; pier-and-spandrel wall articulation with large display windows on first story; round-head bays with decorated keystones and stucco work, third through fifth stories; Chicago windows in bays; elaborate entablature with ornate frieze and heavy brackets; interior decoration modified throughout building's history; but original spatial organization remains. Begun in 1891 in the newly constructed Hodges Building (which remains as the central part of the building), the Outlet Company grew rapidly, and by the 1920s occupied the entire block. The Outlet Company is a key landmark on Weybosset Street, important to the social, economic, and architectural fabric of Downtown.
- 171-174 **Fletcher Building (ca 1895; 1903):** Geo. Waterman Cady, architect; Clarke and Howe, architect of remodeling. 5-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with mid-20th-century storefronts; main entrance in quoined pavilion on Union Street; 5-bay facade of pier-and-recessed-spandrel system with Chicago window infill second through fifth stories culminating with panels and cartouches above which are simple rectangular windows and round-headed windows on top floor. Built as an office structure in the 1890s, the Fletcher Building was extensively remodeled in 1903 when the top three stories were added. It continues to function as an office building.
- 179-189 **Stephen Waterman House (1823 et seq.):** John Holden Greene, architect. 2-story central section with 1-story additions; all now with flat roofs; 20th-century-storefronts; 5-bay facade and 4-bay side elevations of brick second story. Designed and built as a 3-story Federal dwelling for prominent merchant Stephen Waterman by Providence's premier early 19th-century builder architect, John Holden Greene, the structure was used as a house until Mrs. Waterman's death in 1881. It was then converted to commercial use, and 1-story shops were added along the front and sides. In the 20th century, the ground floor was gutted and the third story removed. Some original features remain on the 2nd story. This was once one of the most imposing early 19th-century dwellings in the Downtown area, surpassed only by Greene's long-gone Hoppin House on Westminster Street.
- 198-204 **Providence Athletic Association, later the Crown Hotel (1894; 1901):** Gould, Angell & Swift, architect. 7-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with 1980 storefront (a simulacrum of the original); wide bay windows centered in facade with flanking trabeated windows on second and fourth stories and arcuated windows on third and fifth stories, heavy cornice above fifth story; boxed cornice; side elevation has similar system of alternating bay and

sash windows; interior remodeled mid-20th century. Originally built as a clubhouse for the Providence Athletic Association, the building was converted to hotel use when the top two stories were added in 1901. While the building remained in use as hotel into the 1950s, it suffered gradual deterioration, and was finally bought by Johnson and Wales Business College for dormitory use.

199- Benjamin Dyer Block (ca 1820, 1882): John Holden Greene, architect. 3½-story, stone-trimmed, brick structure with mansard roof on eastern half and hip roof with monitor on western half; 19th- and 20th-century storefronts; regularly spaced double-hung sash windows with brownstone surrounds on second and third stories and two bay windows symmetrically arranged on second and third stories of eastern half; modillion cornice; interiors are late 19th-century offices with no trace of original arrangement. Built for his four daughters by Benjamin Dyer, a principal in the merchant firm of B. & C. Dyer & Co., this handsome, Federal-style 200-foot-long row had an 18-bay facade comprising four attached row houses of four and five bays each; each of the four entrances were recessed and set under a brownstone arch. Paneled balustrades rose at the edges of the hip roof and the monitor. By 1882 the block had devolved to Thomas J. Stead and Salma Manton, sons-in-law of Benjamin Dyer. About this time the eastern half, belonging to Stead, was remodeled with its present Second Empire detailing. The first story has been continuously remodeled to accommodate commercial enterprises. Originally similar in scale and architectural quality to the Stephen Waterman House to the east, the Dyer Block, though heavily altered, has suffered less in the commercialization of the area, and remains the most readily identifiable remnant of the handsome late 18th- and early 19th-century residential neighborhood obliterated by later commercial expansion of the central business district. Preservation of this structure, unique in Greene's work and an important Downtown structure should be encouraged.

**Weybosset Street Comfort Station (1913):** Martin and Hall, architect. 1-story, cast-iron-and-masonry building with two entrances to subterranean restrooms, one each on north and south sides; ornate cast-iron trim with brick and granite used as secondary ornamental sheathing. Built as a comfort station, the building deteriorated over the years and has been long unused in recent years. Originally located on a traffic island in the middle of the street, this small structure is now part of a pedestrian area created in 1978 as part of the Westminster Center project by the city (see Westminster Mall entry). The focus of this recent Weybosset Street redevelopment, which created a small pedestrian plaza on the north side of the street, the comfort station's recycling should make it a once-more vital part of Weybosset Street activity.

210 **St. Francis Chapel (1956):** 3-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame building; simple articulation with deeply recessed entrance on Page Street and regularly spaced sash windows. The Chapel was built by the Franciscan Order to house facilities for its ministry.

214- **Bush Company Building (1873):** Late Italianate, 4-story, masonry structure with brownstone facade; 4-bay facade with modern storefront now undergoing renovation; tra-beated windows on second, segmental arch windows on third, and round-head windows on fourth story; decorated stringcourses between stories; heavy bracketed cornice; interior remodeled in mid-20th-century. Built to house the Charles S. Bush Company (electrical construction and supplies, drugs, chemicals, and dyestuffs), the building was used for retail sales and — increasingly less — as office space. The building was vacated following a fire in the first floor restaurant in February 1977; it underwent renovation beginning in 1980. The Bush Company is a relatively rare survivor of the many Italianate commercial structures once so common Downtown. It is similar in scale to nearby structures on Weybosset Street, but the boldness of its original detailing and its corner location increase its importance to the streetscape.

220- **Loew's, now the Ocean State Performing Arts Center (1928):** C. W. and George Rapp of Chicago, architect. Externally, a fairly restrained 4-story, brick-and-terra-cotta-sheathed, steel-frame structure with irregular 6-bay facade with fluted pilaster strips, molded panels, castellated parapet with plateresque detailing; modified original prismatic marquee; original interior detailing derived from Renaissance, Baroque, Rococo, and Art Deco sources includes elaborate low- and high-relief sculpture, gilded trim, and domed ceiling. The Ocean State has functioned continuously as a theatre since its construction. It was renovated by B. A. Dario in 1975, but declining profitability threatened its demolition in 1977. The building was finally purchased by a consortium of local businesses, with city and state help, and opened as the Ocean State Performing Arts Center in October 1976; it achieved almost instant success. One of the last buildings constructed during Providence's "century of prosperity", the Ocean State Performing Arts Center not only contributes to the visual richness of Weybosset Street, but more importantly injects vitality into the life of Downtown Providence.

223- **Parking Garage (ca 1960):** 2-story, reinforced-concrete parking structure. This parking garage is a major intrusion on Weybosset Street because of its scale and detailing.

225- **Commercial Building (ca 1920):** 2-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame structure with false-front pantile-covered hip roof and truncated corner; brick pier-and-spandrel wall

articulation with aluminum, plate-glass, and enamel panel infill on the first story and double sash windows on the second story; boxed cornice with decorative frieze and brackets. The building is stylistically coherent with the majority of the buildings in the area, and contributes to the commercial streetscape.

244- **Warwick Building (1891):** 3-story brick building with flat roof and domed turret at northeast corner; mid-20th-century storefront, regularly spaced single and paired sash windows on upper stories, bracketed cornice. Stone, Carpenter and Willson's Conrad Building of 1885 probably inspired this slightly later, less elaborate version built by Mary E. Harrington at a cost of \$16,000. The building is a handsome, integral part of upper Weybosset Street.

249- **Commercial Building (ca 1940):** 3-story, brick-sheathed steel-frame structure with pier-and-spandrel wall articulation with casement window infill and terra cotta trim. The building is typical of mid-20th-century, small-scale commercial development in the central business district.

256- **Avery Building (ca 1925):** 2-story, brick-sheathed, steel-frame building with a flank-gable roof; glass and aluminum storefront below seven tall casement windows with wrought-iron grillwork on the second story. This building continues to house the piano store for which it was built. The storefront provides continuity in the streetscape, and the building's small scale is typical of the commercial structures erected in the western part of the downtown during the 1920s.

259- **Commercial Structure (ca 1890):** 4-story brick building with 20th-century storefronts and six regularly spaced windows with granite hood molds on upper stories; corbel cornice. Similar in scale to adjacent commercial structures, this building is a handsome background building on Weybosset Street; its rusticated hood molds, its only ornamentation, increase its visual quality.

262- **Dwight Building (1892):** 4-story brick-sheathed structure with metal and plate-glass storefronts, a-a-a-b fenestration scheme on upper stories consists of three stacks of projecting bay windows flanked by a stack of single sash windows; scalloped parapet. Built for Central Real Estate Company, which owned a number of buildings Downtown, this building continues to function as commercial and office space. The same scale as surrounding structures, this building is typical of late 19th-century commercial structures and, through its detailing, lends variety to the streetscape.

267- **Abbott Park Hotel (ca 1900):** 7-story brick building with truncated corner; slightly altered original entrance on the first story and regularly spaced Chicago windows on Wey-

bosset and Snow Street elevations on the upper stories; heavy stringcourses between stories; wide bracketed cornice. The Abbott Park Hotel is a rare survivor of the many turn-of-the-century downtown hotels. It is little altered, and remains an important visual element on the Weybosset Street-scape, largely because its position at a curve in the street makes it visible from a distance to the east.

- 270 **Richmond Building (1876, 1979):** High Victorian Gothic; 4-story, brick-and-stone building with truncated northwest corner; early 20th-century storefront, slightly altered in 1979, five regularly spaced windows on each of the upper stories with shallow incised designs, second story emphasized by Gothic-arch niche flanked by colonettes on east end of facade; stringcourses defining each story; wooden bracketed cornice. Built probably as an investment property for F. H. Peckham, a surgeon who lived at 59 Snow Street, the Richmond Building was used for many years for offices and small retail enterprises. It has recently undergone rehabilitation, including restoration of the original polychrome masonry scheme, for office and commercial space. Similar to and perhaps inspired by the Wilcox Building of 1875 on lower Weybosset Street, the Richmond Building, with its exuberant High Victorian detailing, is a landmark on upper Weybosset Street.
- 275-281 **Commercial Block (ca 1905):** 5-story brick building with mid-20th century stone-and-plate-glass storefront below three wide window bays with one narrow sash window at the western end on the second and third stories; decorative brick parapet with raised center section.
- 283-285 **Office Building (before 1874):** 3-story brick building with mid-20th-century, aluminum-and-glass storefront and five evenly spaced sash windows on each of the upper stories; band cornice. This structure is an early part of the commercial development of upper Weybosset Street.
- 287-291 **Champlin Building, now Paris Theatre (1895):** Martin and Hall, architect, 4-story, stone-trimmed, brick structure with

mid-20th-century theatre entrance on the first story; colossal engaged Composite pilasters on the upper stories; decorative cornice. Long the home of the Providence Central Club, a men's club which flourished in the early years of the 20th century, the structure has been put to use in recent years as a motion picture theatre. In spite of poor alterations — especially to the first story — the Champlin Building retains much of its Beaux-Arts character and if rehabilitated, could be a highlight of the western end of Weybosset Street.

- 274 **Summerfield Building (1913):** Albert Harkness, architect, 6-story, reinforced-concrete-frame building with glass walls of Chicago-type windows, terra-cotta piers and spandrels; elaborate cornice with egg-and-dart frieze; central decorative cartouche; wide eaves. Built by the Harkness family as an investment property, this building takes its name from the Boston-based Summerfield Furniture Company, which occupied quarters here for many years. The building, having housed a number of smaller concerns in the 1960s and early 1970s, was bought by Johnson and Wales Business College and now houses offices and classrooms. Undoubtedly one of the most handsome early 20th-century buildings in Downtown Providence, the Summerfield Building is noteworthy for its bold, simple lines, its use of expansive areas of glass, its handsome terra-cotta sheathing, and its simplified detailing evocative of Renaissance palazzi. Directly east of Abbott Park, it forms an effective frame for the oldest park in the city.
- 300\* **Beneficent Congregational Church (1809, 1836):** Barnard Eddy and John Newman, architect-builders; James Bucklin, architect of 1836 alterations. Greek Revival, brick-sheathed, masonry structure with low end-gable roof below hemispherical gilded dome and lantern at center; 5-bay facade with central Greek Doric tetrastyle entrance portico; 5-bay side walls; plain boxed cornice (continuation of the corona of entrance portico); roof parapets with Greek fretwork detailing; interior largely original, with some alterations dating from 1836. The building continues to house the congregation, established in 1743 in this area, that constructed

this building in 1809. The oldest religious structure on Providence's west side, Beneficent Congregational Church is a key Providence landmark, visually dominating the upper end of Weybosset Street, a role befitting the institution that initiated the permanent settlement of that part of the city west of the Providence River.

## ADDENDA: FRIENDSHIP STREET

**Rhode Island Judicial Complex (1980):** Robinson Green Beretta, architect, 5-story, brick-and-glass-sheathed, steel-frame structure with penthouse. Articulated with eight pier-and-spandrel bays on the Friendship and Clifford Street sides and an asymmetrical seven bay facade on Dorrance Street side, the Judicial Complex has a colossal, five-story entrance portico facing Dorrance Street. The bays are filled with tinted glass and spandrelite, and the upper two stories feature Flemish-bond brick panels with projecting headers. Built to combine in one facility offices of the judicial branch of state Government scattered throughout the city, the Judicial Complex is a box-like structure typical of the late 1970s, with ornamentation limited to simple patterned brickwork.

## PINE STREET

**Outlet Parking Garage (1963):** Gage and Martinson, designer/builder. This five-story, reinforced-concrete, continuous-ramped parking garage with 435 parking spaces was the first of the major parking structures built in the city following the city's 1959 Master Plan, which called for a number of such buildings throughout Downtown. It opened with great fanfare in 1963, with Mayor Reynolds, Governor Chafee, and Senator Pastore in attendance at the ribbon cutting and al fresco buffet luncheon served on the roof.

## APPENDIX A: NATIONAL REGISTER PROGRAM

The National Register of Historic Places is a record maintained by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service, United States Department of the Interior, of structures, sites, areas, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as the official inventory of the cultural and historic resources of the nation, it includes historical areas within the National Park System, National Historic Landmarks, federal properties nominated by federal agencies, and properties of national, state, and local significance nominated by each state and approved by the Service. It is an authoritative guide for federal, state, and local governments and private groups and individuals everywhere, identifying those properties which are particularly worthy of preservation throughout the nation. Registered properties are protected from adverse effects of federally funded and licensed activities by a state and federal review process. Listing on the National Register is a prerequisite for eligibility for federal matching grants-in-aids funds which are administered within the state by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission. The following properties are listed in the National Register of Historic Places:

Custom House Historic District  
Cathedral of Saints Peter and Paul,  
Cathedral Square  
Daniel Arnold House, 33 Chestnut Street  
Biltmore Hotel, 11 Dorrance Street  
City Hall, 25 Dorrance Street  
Union Trust Company Building, 62 Dorrance Street  
"Shakspear Hall", 128 Dorrance Street  
Union Station, Exchange Terrace  
Federal Building, Kennedy Plaza  
Grace Church, 175 Mathewson Street  
Majestic Theatre, 201 Washington Street  
First Universalist Church, 250 Washington Street  
Rhode Island Hospital Trust, 15 Westminster Street

Merchants Bank, 20 Westminster Street  
The Arcade, 130 Westminster Street  
Shepard's, 259 Westminster Street  
Federal Building, 24 Weybosset Street  
Loew's State Theatre, 200 Weybosset Street  
Beneficent Congregational Church,  
300 Weybosset Street



## APPENDIX B: TAX REFORM ACT OF 1976

The Tax Reform Act of 1976 contains important new tax incentives for preserving historic income-producing properties and alters provisions in the federal tax code which have worked against historical preservation. Properties that qualify as "certified historic structures" are entitled to tax advantages under the act. A "certified historic structure" is defined in the law as a depreciable structure which is (A) listed in the National Register, (B) located in a National Register historic district and is certified by the Secretary of the Interior as being of historic significance to the district or (C) located in a local historic zoning district certified by the Secretary of the Interior to be controlled by design review procedures which will substantially achieve the purpose of preserving buildings of historical significance. One provision of the Act permits the owner of a certified historic structure to write off, over a five-year period, expenditures which are part of a certified rehabilitation of the property. Before passage of the Tax Reform Act, property owners were required to spread deductions over the life of the property. The new law allows larger tax savings in shorter time, thus encouraging owners to rehabilitate historic commercial properties. Another provision allows taxpayers to depreciate "substantially rehabilitated historic property" as though they were the original users of the property, entitling them to use accelerated depreciation which could previously only be used for new buildings. The code discourages demolition of historic properties in two ways. Demolition costs can no longer be deducted, and any new building replacing a demolished historic structure is denied accelerated depreciation.

The preservation provisions of the Tax Reform Act of 1976 were re-enacted by Congress in November 1980 to run through December 31, 1983. It is likely that Congress will re-assess the provisions and rewrite this portion of the tax code. Current indications are that this will occur during the summer of 1981. Consult the Federal Register or the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission for the most recent information.

## APPENDIX C: GRANTS-IN-AID PROGRAM

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 established a program of matching grants-in-aid for the acquisition and development of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Once a year, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission accepts applications from individuals, public and private organizations, and state and local governmental units who own properties listed on the National Register.

Matching grants-in-aid can be used to acquire, protect, stabilize, rehabilitate, restore, or reconstruct National Register properties. Allowable work under the program includes exterior and interior restoration, structural repairs, installation or updating of utility systems, architectural fees, archaeology, historical research, and the installation of protective systems. New construction, furnishings, and modern landscaping are not allowable costs.

The Commission receives many more applications each year than it is able to fund. The applications are evaluated according to the following criteria: the architectural and historical significance of the property; the degree to which the proposed use and treatment respect the historical and architectural values of the buildings; the urgency of the proposed work; the public benefit of the project, both educational and economic; the degree to which the property is threatened; and the geographical location of the property. The Commission may fund up to half the cost of a project. The grants awarded by the Commission have generally ranged in size from \$3,000 to \$50,000.

Once the Commission has selected the projects to be funded, the grantees must submit professionally prepared specifications and drawings developed in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation Projects. The Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service in the Department of the Interior must review and approve the individual projects before any work can begin.

Financial assistance for the acquisition and development of National Register properties is provided for the benefit of the general public. Therefore, upon accepting a grant, the property owner must sign a preservation easement which is recorded with the deed to the property. The easement states that the owner agrees to maintain the property and not make any visual or structural changes without prior approval from the Commission. The number of years this agreement is in effect depends on the amount of funds received. Unless the grant-supported work is visible from a public right-of-way, the property must be open for public view twelve days a year.

Matching funds can come from any non-federal source; from Community Development Block Grant Funds; and in the form of donated services, real property, or equipment.

## APPENDIX D: SURVEY FORM AND MAPS

A standard survey form, the "Historic Building Data Sheet," has been prepared by the Preservation Commission for use throughout the state. On the form a property is identified by plat and lot numbers, street number, ownership at the time the survey was conducted, present use, neighborhood land use, and a photograph.

Each property is also identified by one or more broad period time-frames which denote the original construction date, and date(s) of major additions or alterations: P = prehistoric (before 1636), C = Colonial (1700-1800), F = Federal (1775-1840), GR = Greek Revival (1825-1865), EV = Early Victorian (1840-1870), LV = Late Victorian (1865-1910), ET = early twentieth century (1900-1940), MT = mid-twentieth century (1940-1975), and LT = late twentieth century (1975-present).

The "COMMENTS" section is used for brief notations regarding a building's style, structure, details, and architectural significance. The "HISTORY & SOURCES" section includes notes on individuals, organizations, and events associated with the building; dates and nature of significant additions or alterations; selected bibliographical and pictorial references; and identification of the building on historical maps and in street directories.

The four "EVALUATION" sections are intended as tools for quick reference to appraise various aspects of a property's preservation value. In general, the key factors that indicate the reason for preserving structures have to do with their visual significance, that is "Architectural value" and "Importance to neighborhood." Other factors, such as condition, should be seen as pluses. Nor should a low historical rating be allowed to militate against the preservation of buildings deemed of architectural significance or those important in the neighborhood context.





Fig. 87: Survey map of Downtown Providence.

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The following bibliography is intended to provide a basic list of reference works useful in the study of Downtown history. It is by no means comprehensive. The chief omission is any reference to building- or project-specific articles published in local newspapers or magazines, principally the *Providence Journal* or *Bulletin* and the *Providence Magazine* or *Board of Trade Journal*, published by the Providence Board of Trade (later Chamber of Commerce) from the mid-1890s until the early 1930s. References to specific articles in these and other publications are well catalogued in the Rhode Island Index at the main branch of the Providence Public Library.

The list of maps is arranged chronologically and includes only those maps which deal specifically with Downtown Providence. As with the bibliography, these are basic reference tools. Other, more specific maps include the city plat maps, located in the Land Records Office at City Hall, and the extensive collection at the Rhode Island Historical Society Library.

Public investment through grants and loans has encouraged a considerable increase in the interest in and commitment to historic preservation among Downtown property owners. The rehabilitations of the Strand Theatre, the Richmond Building, the Earle Building, Slade's Building, Hall's Block, the Hay Building, and the Owen Block — among others — represent a growing awareness of the visual appeal and financial utility of older commercial properties. This rehabilitation activity represents an attitude toward the central business district far removed from the drastic urban renewal programs of the 1950s and 1960s. Only through such concern and financial support by property owners themselves can the historically and architecturally significant portions of Downtown's heritage be maintained for future generations.

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