

THE HISTORY AND ARCHITECTURE OF  
THE HOUSE AT 362 BENEFIT STREET  
Providence, Rhode Island

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## THE HISTORY

Evidence both implicit and explicit indicates that the house now located at 362 Benefit Street, and formerly located at 877-879 Chalkstone Avenue prior to its move, was constructed circa 1750. The following documentary evidence states that the land on which the structure was built was, in 1724, owned by Daniel Smith, who had received it that year from his father, Benjamin Smith.

By 1760, according to a subsequent deed, the property had not changed hands, and was still owned by Daniel Smith.

Fragments of the newspaper "The Newport Mercury", dated Thursday, August 15, 1776, found in a wall of the structure, would indicate that the structure is at least of that era.

The strongest evidence concerning the date of construction, is the stylistic evidence. That the structure is a gambrel-roofed mid-18th century farmhouse is clear. At that point in time, in the New England area, that style was a common one.

Therefore, on the strength of the stylistic evidence, the 1776 newspaper fragment, and the various property deeds, it can be stated with reasonable accuracy, that the structure in question was constructed circa 1750 by Daniel Smith.

## THE ARCHITECTURE

The house at 362 Benefit Street survives as one of the few pre-Revolutionary gambrel-roof structures in the Providence area. Built circa 1750, the modest farmhouse was constructed in a manner which at the time was considered to be fashionable as well as practical. The gambrel roof was an English innovation which became popular there in the 17th century. Not until the following century did the gambrel mode become popularly accepted in the Colonies. Stylistically, the gambrel roof served to lessen the medieval verticality of the high-pitched roof, a mode which in previous years prevailed. In a practical sense, the gambrel roof allowed the upper story of a structure more living space, by lessening the roof pitch. Dormer windows, when integrated with the gambrel roof, added to the appearance of the structure, as well as the comfort of the upper level space.

The structure in question has undergone extensive reconstruction since it was moved to its present location on Benefit Street from Chalkstone Avenue. Its stylistic integrity however, remains intact. In fact, the changes which have been brought about as a result of recent renovation give the structure an appearance which is more historically accurate than it was prior to the move. At that point, cosmetic changes had considerably altered the historic appearance of the structure. The exterior had been sheathed with a hard textured synthetic shingle. All the windows were of the contemporary four over four and two

over two variety. In addition, a third window had been inserted between the two to the right of the front door, inappropriately creating a "picture window" effect.

The present appearance of the structure is a result of a rehabilitation project which duplicated the house's original style, using new materials to do so.

Currently, the two-story gambrel-roofed farmhouse has a new clapboard exterior, replacing the shingles. Windows have been replaced with twelve over twelve light sash. Two windows remain directly to the right of the front door. The window inappropriately placed between these two has been omitted. Also removed were the two dormer windows which had been built at the midpoint of the gambrel roof. In their stead have been constructed two other dormers, symmetrically placed, but further apart than those removed.

Originally, the structure was symmetrically designed, having one front door, placed in the center of the front facade. A wing was added to the original structure, possibly at the turn of the century, circa 1800. At this point the right side front door was added. This feature has been done away with, leaving the front facade with one front doorway.

A new outer chimney has been constructed replacing the original, but maintaining the massive size typical of Georgian structures of this type.

A substantial brick foundation has been newly constructed, and at the rear, serves as a lower exterior facade for the garage and basement area.

# Around the Neighborhoods

## House Moved to Benefit being Restored

The Chalkstone Avenue house endangered last fall because of expansion by Roger Williams Hospital and saved by its subsequent relocation to 362 Benefit Street is currently undergoing restoration.

The 200-year old house was to be demolished until its 11th-hour rescue by Mrs. Angela Brown Fischer of Boston. Mrs. Fischer, daughter of PPS Founder, John Nicholas Brown, had been contacted about the property by members of Hill Realty, a real estate company which has moved and restored numerous endangered

houses.

Recently Mrs. Fischer sold the house to George Waterman, who plans to continue its restoration and make it his home. Richard Long of Newport is the architect responsible for the design and implementation of the restoration.

The gambrel-roofed farm house recalls the post-revolutionary days when Chalkstone Avenue was a country lane. In its new location, the house is set back from the street as country houses were in the eighteenth century; it will be surrounded by a picket fence.

The new white-washed brick foundation will support a Colonial facade with 12-over-12 window lights on the first floor and 9-over-9 on the top floor. Original decorated cornice, mouldings and framing are being uncovered as a result of an ongoing exploratory process by the architect. These elements will then be reproduced by individual craftsmen.

Entrance into the house will be through a reproduced 6-panel door reflecting the best in early 18th century house doorways and hardware. An 18th century granite front-step ensemble complete with boot scraper, originally part of a Pine Street house, will be installed. Old period furnishings will be incorporated into the interior which has little original structure intact.

Richard Long's list of credits include the Casino and Casino Theatre restoration in Newport and the windmill preservation in Portsmouth. "Each house has its own secrets and mysteries; it is a challenge to find another builder's quirk. The exciting part is that we have a client on Benefit Street who is fastidious about the project," commented architect Long.

RECORDS of #362 BENEFIT STREET  
(formerly #877-879 Chalkstone Avenue)

Plat 16/Lot 98  
Plat 117/Lot 417

Numbering: 1875-1883 "Chalkstone Ave. near River Ave."  
1884-1892 #465 Chalkstone Ave.  
1894-198\_ #877-879 Chalkstone Ave.  
198\_ to date #362 Benefit Street

1724 "Plat of Common Lands, 1724", found on North Providence Plat Card #113, "This Plat is a copy of one in the hands of Samuel Arnold". The table on the card states, "At a meeting of the Proprietors of the Common Lands on the East of the Seven mile line in Providence held by adjournment on 15th day of June 1724 then this plat was by a clear vote of the said Proprietors accepted allowed of and conformed as - Attest, Richard Brown, Clerk." On this map the structure in question would be located on Lot #33 which is set off to "William Runnolds". There are no records in either Providence or North Providence (these records are kept in Pawtucket City Hall) that pertain to Runnolds or to other possible spellings such as Reynolds that deal with the property in question.

1724 In a deed drawn on the 13th of May (prior to the recording of the above plat) but not recorded until Feb. 26, 1725, Benjamin Smith turned over part of his property to his son, Daniel Smith, "for the love and goodwill I feel for my son". The property included "certain lands, meadows and privileges: which are all situated (sic.) lying and being on the eastward side of the Seven mile line within the township of Providence." Specifically the gift included a 50 acre parcel in the "Wonscott" Meadow, another parcel of 40 acres, two small house lots in the town, rights to a thatch bed, and the rights to the common and undivided lands eastward of the Seven mile line of Providence. (Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 6:248). It was not uncommon during the first generation of settlement for fathers to divide their land prior to their own death by granting land to their sons as they reached maturity and/or married; it was only later in the 18th c. when land in the early settlements was becoming scarce that the practice of the older son inheriting all the father's property became common. In 1743 a second deed from Benjamin Smith to his son Daniel grants an additional parcel of 70 acres, described as a tract near William Olney's dwelling house, and southerly of said house, bounded northerly on the road to Killinsly (sic..prob. Killingly), southerly by land belonging to David Ruttingburg and to Robert Gibbs and southwesterly on land belonging to Neriah Waterman and Joseph Angol (sic...Angell??) and on the original grant of Arthur Fenner. During this early period the Chalkstone Road is sometimes referred to as the "road to Connecticut" or "the road to Killingly". (Providence Land Evidence, Deed Book 11:207).

1760 By inference we know that Daniel Smith owned Lot #33 at this time. Rebecca Checkley, of Prov., the widow of the Reverend John, deceased, for the sum of £ 350 paid by Job Smith, a Prov. Distiller, conveyed, "one full moiety (sic.) or half of a certain wood lot of land - situated in that part of the township of Prov. called the Stated Commons at or near the place called Small Brook, the said whole lot of which the granted Premises is  $\frac{1}{2}$ , was laid out on the Original Right of Daniel Brown, deceased, is

numbered ye 31st Lot on the map of the stated Common Lotts and is butted and bounded as follows, viz, Southwardly on a highway leading from said Prov. towards Killingly, and on all other sides on Lands of Daniel Smith: and is the Same that was Purchased by my husband of Hossanna Brown..." This instrument was recorded July 4, 1760, "in the 34th year of the Reign of our Sovering(sic.) Lord George the 2nd, by the Grace of God, King." (Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 17:88).

\*\*\*\* A series of 3 deeds executed between 1761 and 1772 suggest that Job Olney may have lived in the structure in question during this early period. Other records, including deeds and City Directories, indicate that Daniel and Job Smith were living within the town at this time.

1761 For the sum of £ 50 currant money of said colony, Daniel Smith and Job Smith, both Prov. Distillers, conveyed to Job Olney, Cordwainer and Tanner, "One certain small lott(sic.) of land situate in said Prov., joining on the North side of the highway leading over a rivalet called Small Brook and a little eastward from said Brook...Said Lot measures just 40' square, and is bounded as follows, viz, beginning at a White Oak tree standing by the side of said highway, and from thence or a point opposite thereto in the said north side of the road to measure westward just 40' along said highway by which it is bounded on the south and holding that same breadth included within Straight lines to extend northward 40' square with the said road where it is terminated by a straight line on the north and joins on the east, north, and west land of the Grantors...". (Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 17:199). The suggestion is that both Daniel and Job owned adjoining lands, it is not clear whether they were jointly held or were individual properties held by individuals of the same family.

1765 Job Smith, a Prov. Distiller, conveyed to Job Olney, for the sum of £ 50 Old Tenor, "a certain piece of land lying in Prov. and near to the brook called Small Brook, bounded as follows, Beginning at the southeast corner of the said Job Olney's Lot, then ranging easterly by the highway 40", then northerly in a parrellel line with said Olney's Lot 80'. then westerly in a Parrellel Line with said Olney's lot 80' then southerly 40' to the northwest corner of said Olney's Lot...". When combined with the previous parcel this gave Olney a lot 80' square, with 80' frontage on the Chalkstone Road. (Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 18:144).

1772 For the sum of £ 12, Job Smith, a merchant of Prov., conveyed to Job Olney, a tanner of Prov., "a certain small tract or parcel of land situate lying and being in the town of North Providence... and contains the percise quantity of one acre of land adjoining too(sic.) and partly within said acre of land the said Job Olney's dwelling house now stande, the lot wherein said house stands is 80' square so that the one acre of land now conveyed is to extend across 3 parts of said 80' lot and they(sic.) said lot is the same lot that I heretofore sold the said Job Olney and the one acre of land now to be conveyed is bounded as follows, viz,

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Beginning at a Black Oak tree a few rods eastward of the said Olney's dwelling house, from thence to extend a westerly course by the highway 20 rods (330'), thence northerly on a right angle from said highway 9 rods and  $\frac{1}{4}$  (152.6') from thence a parallel line with the first mentioned line 20 rods and from thence southward on a right angle to the first mentioned bound.". (North Providence Land Evidence, Deed Book 1:304).

- 1786 From the North Providence Town Council and Probate Records, 1767-1801, Book B, part 1, pg. 278: Caleb Jenks was paid 15 shillings for his services in surveying the highway over Chalkstone Hill. From a meeting held November 11, 1786. Clearly this does not imply that there was no road prior to this, merely that it was an unimproved or private road at the time. The era immediately following the revolution was an active time of road building and improvement in most mercantile cities. Prov., particularly, grew rapidly during this period.
- 1816 A deed for lots 34 & 35 on the stated Commons allows the inference that Job Smith was still the owner of lot 33 on the Commons. The Providence merchant, Moses Brown, in consideration of \$1900.00 paid by James B. Mason, a Prov. merchant, two lots on the commons in North Prov., #34 & 35, "bounded on the north with said Mason's Land, on the east with William Smith's Land; on the south partly on Job Smith's Lotts, partly on the lot called Winsor's Meadow on the plat now in the possession of William Valentine, westerly on a two rod road, which I gave to North Providence going between said Mason's other land and lot #35. The said 2 lots containing by estimation 19 acres..." The designation "Winsor's Meadows" is found originally on the 1724 Plat map of the Common Lands. (North Providence Land Evidence, Deed Book 4:308).
- \*\*\*\* James B. Mason was the father of Sarah Mason Ruggles who later married Levi Eaton. The Eaton estate and Oaklands Farm are prominent on plat maps of the area during the mid to late 19th c.
- \*\*\*\* Job Smith died in August of 1818. Only three of his nine children survived him: Henry, Benjamin and Susan. "His will left a life interest in his property to his wife, and after her to Benjamin and Susan, 'Henry having had his share'. Benjamin was executor of the will. A division of property was later made between Benjamin and Susan, with Susan retaining the residence." (John Smith, The Miller of Providence, Rhode Island: Some of His Decendants; Charles William Farnham, reprinted from Rhode Island History, vol. 20, no. 4 thru vol. 24, no. 3. available in book form at RIHS Library). Ruth Harris Smith, Job's wife, died in 1820. An examination of deeds from Job Smith, Benjamin and/or Susan Smith, and Job Olney has failed to reveal how the property was transferred to Sheffield Smith. Similarly examination of deeds to Sheffield Smith has proved inconclusive. Although Sheffield Smith's parents are known, William and Alice, they do not appear to have been Rhode Islanders, Sheffield was born in Conneticut. There are no deed or probate records from or to a William Smith that relate to this property in either the Prov. or North Prov. records. He married Sally A. Sweet, however the failure to identify her father leaves the question of inheritance from his wife's family unanswered. The aforementioned residence of Job Smith was in Johnston, near Manton.



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1842 Tax records for the town of North Providence show that Sheffield Smith paid real estate taxes in the sum of \$7.16 during that year, the first for which information is available.

1854 Adeed from Waterman B. Angell to Sheffield Smith, both of North Prov., conveyed a parcel of land on the north side of the Chalkstone Road and along the Small Brook. The parcel bounded on land owned by Angell, William Grosvenor, and Sheffield Smith, and included some  $6 \frac{1}{2}$  acres. While not the parcel in question it appears to be that part of Smith's property which in the 1875 & 1882 Atlases forms the boundary between the lots owned by Grosvenor and Smith. (North Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 19:419)

\*\*\*\* The North Prov. Land Evidence records show a number of transfers of large parcels of land to Sheffield Smith during this period. (Deed Books 8:142, 8:143, 16:494, 17:168, 17:466, 17:638, 19:419, 19:422, 19:423, 19:503, 19:504 & 21:87). Much of this land was platted for house lots and sold by Smith. North Prov. Plat #66, recorded in 1854 was land just south of the property in question on Chalkstone, while Plat #175 was the property purchased from Waterman B. Angell in Deed Book 19:419. The plat, recorded in 1878, included the land west of River Ave. to Tiffany, or just west of the property in question. Much of the property purchased by Smith during this period was along Chalkstone Ave. or it's intown equivalent Martin Street making possitive identification difficult. Boundaries are often given in relation to trees or piles of stones which do not correlate with later documents.

1850's During the 50's Sheffield Smith conveyed property to Joseph J. Congdon, also called Jeremiah. From the later deeds from Smith to McSherry it is clear that this is next to the property in question.

1855 For the sum of \$200.00, Sheffield Smith conveyed to Joseph J. Congdon, of North Prov., "One certain piece or lot of land containing about 2000 sq. feet of land be it the same more or less together with a shop or building which I am to move on to said lot of land situated in said North Prov. near to Mr. William Chase's works and is bounded and described as follows, to wit, beginning at the southeasterly corner of said lot on the north side of the Chalkstone Hill Road so called at the corner of Dr. William Grosvenor's land and from thence running westerly with the north line of said road 40' to a stone set into the ground and from thence running northerly with said stone wall 40' to said Grosvenor's land thence running southerly with said Grosvenor's land about 50' to the first mentioned corner bounded at the said road, together with a priviledge to the well on my adjoining land to take and use what water therefrom as he and his heirs and assignees forever they paying their due proportion part in keeping said well and appertenances in good repair." (North Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 21:229).

1857 For the sum of \$225.00 Sheffield Smith again conveyed property to Jerimiah Congdon, "Beginning at the southwesterly corner of

the Grantee's land on the north side of the Chalkstone Road and from thence running westwardly with said road  $63\frac{1}{2}'$  to a slat fence, thence northwardly with said slat fence 61' to the face of said stone wall 73' to the corner of the Grantee's land thence southwardly with the Grantee's land 55' to the starting point of said lot." (North Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 21:684).

- 1874 Jerimiah Congdon and his wife Julia Ann Congdon of Prov., conveyed both adjoining lots of land, containing 2000 sq. feet of land with all the buildings on it, back to Sheffield Smith for the sum of \$600.00. (North Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 246:403).
- 1871 Sheffield Smith, of North Prov., for the sum of \$2200.00, conveyed to Peter McCherry(sic.), of North Prov., "A certain piece or parcel of land with all the buildings and improvements thereon situated in said North Providence and is bounded and described as follows: to wit: Viz, Beginning at the southwest corner thereof at a peg 2' north of the north face of a bank wall which corner is a point of Chalkstone Road thence running N-14-3/4° W bounding westerly by Grantor's land 83 7/100', thence N-77-3/4° E, 95 9/10', thence S-14-3/4° E, 77 4/100' to Chalkstone road, bounding easterly by land of the Grantor's and land of Jerimiah Congdon, thence bounding southerly by Chalkstone road S-74-3/4° W, 95 8/10' to beginning. Containing 7669 sq. feet." The same square footage held, varying only slightly to 7677 sq. feet, until the house was moved. (Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 284:288 and in North Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 54:527).
- \*\*\*\* At the same time Sheffield Smith quit claim "a certain piece or parcel of land, situated in said North Prov. and is bounded and described as follows: to wit: viz: North by land of Jerimiah Congdon, south by the Chalkstone Road, and west by land of said Smith, holding a width of 6' more or less" to Peter McCherry of North Prov. for the sum of \$1.00. (North Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 56:190).
- \*\*\*\* Also as a part of this transaction McCherry granted a mortgage to Sheffield Smith for the sum of \$493.31 secured by the property. The note was payable one year after date (Sept. 30, 1871) and included interest of 6% per year. (North Prov. Land Evidence, Mortgage Book 59:43).
- 1932 Eliza C. Murray of Prov., acting as guardian of the estate of Edward L. McSherry, by the authority of the Probate Court Session of Sept. 2, 1932, conveyed an undivided  $\frac{1}{4}$  interest in the property on Chalkstone Ave. to Mary J. McSherry for the sum of \$1250.00. The dimensions of the property were given as: 83.07' X 95.9' X 77.04' X 95.8'. "Being the same premises conveyed to Peter McSherry by deed of Sheffield Smith, Sept. 5, 1871, in Deed Book 284 at page 288 of the Prov. records. Said interest is subject to right of Dower in favor of Bridget McSherry, widow of Peter McSherry." Murray was acting for Edward McSherry as a guardian and not on behalf of the estate of a deceased. (Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 761:462).

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\*\*\*\* Information relating to the property in city directories, especially during the early period, is inconclusive. The first listing for Sheffield Smith is in 1868, when he is listed as a quarryman living on "Smith St. above Valley, in North Prov.". By 1871 the address is more specific, "3rd from Valley, Smith, North Prov.", in 1872 the address is given as 213 Smith, and in 1874 Smith's occupation changes to farmer. Peter McSherry first appears in the Prov. City Directory in 1875:

1875-1883	Peter McSherry, house, Chalkstone Ave. near River Ave.
1884-1885	Peter McSherry, laborer, #465 Chalkstone
1886	Bridget McSherry, widow of Peter, #465 Chalkstone *Peter McSherry died Sept. 2, 1885
1888	Bridget McSherry, #465 Chalkstone Edward McSherry, boards Robert McSherry, boards
1889-1891	Bridget McSherry, widow of Peter, #465 Edward McSherry, milkman, boards John McSherry, striker, boards Robert McSherry, laborer, boards
1892	Bridget McSherry, widow of Peter, #465 Edward McSherry, milkman, boards Mrs. Emma McGarry, #465 h. Martin McGarry, laborer, boards Patrick McGarry, laborer, h. William McGarry, boards
1894	Bridget McSherry, #877 John McSherry, milkman, boards John F. Kelley, laborer, boards Thomas Lovett, laborer, h.
1895	Bridget McSherry, #877 James O'Neil, carpenter, #879
1896	Bridget McSherry, #877 Edward McSherry, #879
1897	Bridget McSherry, #877 John McSherry, laborer, boards Daniel J. Hogan, piper, #879 Joseph Newton, laborer, boards
1898	#877 - no listing Daniel J. Hogan, piper, #879
1899	Bridget McSherry, widow, #877 John McSherry, laborer, boards #879 - no listing
1900	Bridget McSherry, #877 John McSherry, laborer, boards Michael Conley, laborer, #879 George Ridsdale, foreman, boards
1901	Bridget McSherry, #877 John McSherry, laborer, boards Michael Conley, laborer, #879
1903	Bridget McSherry, #877 John McSherry, laborer, boards Patrick Curran, shuttle maker, #879

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1905 Bridget McSherry, #877  
John McSherry, laborer, boards  
Mrs. Ann Rehill, #879

1907 Bridget McSherry, #877  
John McSherry, laborer, boards  
Charles Adams, brakeman, #879

1909 Bridget McSherry, #877  
John McSherry, laborer, boards  
James H. Norburn, machinist, #879

1911 Bridget McSherry, #877  
John McSherry, laborer, boards  
James H. Hayden, ice man, #879

1913 Bridget McSherry, #877  
John McSherry, laborer, boards  
Edmund Shallcrows, meat cutter, #879

1915 Bridget McSherry, #877  
John McSherry, laborer, boards  
William Albert Farnell, at B&S, #879

1917 Bridget McSherry, #877  
John McSherry, laborer, boards  
Benjamin N. Smith, machanic, #879

1919-1920 Bridget McSherry, #877  
John McSherry, laborer, boards  
Dominick Gallant, brakeman, #879

1921-1922 Bridget McSherry, #877  
James Coates, machinist, #879

1923-1924 John McSherry, #877  
Frank McCaffrey, #879

1925-1926 John McSherry, laborer, #877  
Teresa A. Crosby, boards  
#879 vacant

1927-1928 John McSherry, laborer, #877  
Teresa A. Crosby, boards  
William A. Dietrich, boilermaker, #879

1929-1930 John McSherry, laborer, #877  
Daniel A. Dooley, operative, #879

1931-1932 John McSherry, laborer, #877  
Teresa A. Crosby, boards  
Daniel A. Dooley, operative, #879

1933-1936 Mrs. Mary J. McSherry, #877  
Teresa A. Crosby, boards  
Walter H Cawthron, clerk, #879

1937 Mrs. Mary J. McSherry, #877  
Teresa A. Crosby, boards  
George Walsh, #879

1938 Mrs. Mary J, McSherry, #877  
William Lariviere, #879

1939-1940 Mrs. Mary J. McSherry, #877  
Mario Mizzini, boards  
Charles Farrell, #879

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1941 Mary J. Farrell, formerly Mary J. McSherry, now the wife of Charles Farrell of Prov., transferred the property to Charles and Mary J. Farrell as joint tenants. (Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 840:276).

\*\*\*\* Sometime during 1940 or 1941 Mary J. McSherry, widow of John McSherry who had died ca. 1933, remarried. Her second husband was Charles Farrell who had lived next door in #879 Chalkstone for about 2 years prior to the marriage. The Prov. City Directory indicates that the Farrells continued to live in the house:

1941-1948	Charles Farrell, #877 Mario Mizzini, boards Thomas A. Bamford, #879
1949	Mario Mizzini, #877 Thomas A. Bamford, #879

1949 Mary J. Farrell, formerly Mary J. McSherry, a widow of Prov., conveyed the property to William J. Corrigan and Alice G. Whelan, both of Prov., as joint tenants. No revenue stamps were required for this transaction, however the deed is a warranty deed. (Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 957:377).

\*\*\*\* During the brief period of their ownership Corrigan and Whelan used the property for rental:

1950	Mario Mizzini, #877 Albert T. Ziegelmayr, #877 Thomas A. Bamford, #879
1951	Thomas Giblin, #877 Albert T. Ziegelmayr, #877 Thomas A. Bamford, #879
1952	Thomas Giblin, #877 Albert T. Ziegelmayr, #877 Thomas A. Bamford, #879
1953	Thomas Giblin, #877 George Fronteine, #877 Thomas A. Bamford, #879
1954	#877 vacant #879 vacant

1953 In a deed executed May 18th at 1:50 PM, Alice G. Whelan conveyed the property to Vincent I. McMahon of Pawtucket. The transaction was by warranty deed, however no revenue stamps were required for the transaction. (Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 1007:73).

1953 In a second deed executed that day at 1:51 PM, Vincent I. McMahon, unmarried, of Pawtucket, transferred the property to Alice G. Whelan, of Prov., and Katherine L. McGough, of Syracuse, N.Y., as tenants in common. The deed was a warranty deed, but there were no revenue stamps required for the transaction. (Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 1007:74).

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- 1953 Later that year, on the 16th of September, Alice G. Whelan, of Prov., and Katherine L. McGough, of Syracuse, N.Y., transferred the property to Julia R. Elbag and her daughter Norma E. Preziosi, both of Pawtucket, as joint tenants. Katherine L. McGough was unmarried at the time and D. Everett Whelan, husband of Alice, released his right of curtesy. (Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 1014:191).
- 1979 Julia R. Elbag and Norma E. Preziosi, both of Prov., conveyed the property to Roger Williams Hospital of #825 Chalkstone Ave. in Prov.. Julia R. Elbag was unmarried and Vincent J. Preziosi released his right of curtesy as the husband of Norma. (Prov. Land Evidence, Deed Book 1217:555).

\*\*\*\* From 1955 until 1980 the property was rented:

1955-1959	Mrs. Rose Manfredi, #877 Thomas E. Richardson, #877 James H. Richardson, #879
1960	James H. Richardson, #877 Mrs. Anna Giarusso, #877 #879 no return
1961-1962	James H. Richardson, #877 Mrs. Anna Giarusso, #877 William B. McDonnell, #879
1963	James H. Richardson, #877 Mrs. Anna Giarusso, #877 Vincent J. Precious, #879
1964-1968	Mrs Anna Giarusso, #877 Vincent J. Precious, #879
1969	Mrs. Anna Giarusso, #877 #879 vacant
1970	Mrs. Anna Giarusso, #877 Vincent J. Precious, #879 Mrs. Theresa Atkinson, #879
1971	Mrs Anna Giarusso, #877 Mrs. Theresa Atkinson, #879
1972-1975	Mrs. Anna Giarusso, #877 #879 vacant
1978	#877 vacant #879 vacant
1979	#877 vacant #879 no return
1980	#877 vacant #879 vacant

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PETER McSHERRY

also: McShay, McSheroy, McCherry

Peter McSherry purchased the property in 1871 from Sheffield Smith. He lived there with his family until his death in 1885 at which time the property was left to his son John with a life estate for his wife Bridget. On John's death the property was devised to his widow, Mary and his nephew Edward. Ultimately Mary purchased Edward's  $\frac{1}{4}$  so that by the time of her second marriage to Charles Farrell she was sole owner.

Peter McSherry, born ca.1819 in Ireland, son of Edward McSherry married Bridget, also born in Ireland, date unknown

the couple had at least 6 children, only 4 of whom are identified in North Prov. Vital Records:

Patrick, born 1872, in North Prov. of Peter & Bridget died Oct.27,1872 of brain fever,

Edward, 3rd child of Peter & Bridget, born Dec.23,1868

Joseph, 5th child of Peter & Bridget born July 29,1871

Mary Ann, 6th child of Peter & Bridget born Sept.14,1873

The Prov. Directory suggests at least 2 others:

Robert, who boarded w/ Bridget 1888-1891

John, who boarded at various times and later became owner of the structure

Probate Records of Peter McSherry: Providence A14718

McSherry died Sept.2,1885 in Prov. at age 56

Bridget was named Executor of the estate

apparently McSherry died intestate

quote from the probate record: "I, Bridget McSherry, Administratrix of the estate and widow of Peter McSherry late of the City and County of Prov., deceased: On oath...say that there is no personal estate of any kind, name or nature belonging to the estate of said deceased of which to make any inventory."\*

\*note that this inventory would not have included real estate even if McSherry had held any at the time of his death.

#362 Benefit Street

DANIEL & JOB SMITH

Daniel Smith, born June 27, 1697, son of Benjamin Smith & his first wife  
Mercy Angell

died in Prov. Oct. 9, 1770

he was identified as a distiller

married Dorcas Harris, March 21, 1725/26

she was the daughter of William & Abigail Harris

born May 16, 1704

died Nov. 19, 1745

they had 7 children:

William, Feb. 2, 1727

Benjamin, April 7, 1728

Abigail, March 27, 1731

Alice, Nov. 22, 1733

Job, Sept. 24, 1736

Sarah, May 13, 1738

Ruth, June 21, 1743

Daniel Smith's Probate Records are indexed in Prov. Records,  
A901, but have been lost or destroyed.

Job Smith, born Sept 24, 1736, died Aug. 1818

married Ruth Harris, Feb. 3, 1765

she was the daughter of Henry Harris and Hope Hawkins  
of Providence

Ruth was born April 2, 1740 & died Sept. 1820

Job was a Quaker. He ran a distilling business in Prov.. The later  
part of his life was spent in a house he built in Johnston,  
near Manton.

The couple had 9 children, of which only 3 survived Job: Henry,  
Benjamin & Susan

Col. Henry, Feb. 10, 1766

Benjamin, Jan. 14, 1768

Sarah, Feb. 22, 1770, died Sept. 3, 1788

Dorcas, May 24, 1772, died Oct. 22, 1772

Abigail, Nov. 29, 1773, died 1814

Thomas, Aug. 10, 1775, died March 18, 1776

Major Harris, May 2, 1777, died Dec. 1, 1815

Thomas, June 17, 1779, died Aug. 17, 1780

Susan/Susanna, May 28, 1782, married Nathan Brown 1826

- no issue

1774 CENSUS: lists Job Smith's household of 15 persons:

3 males over 16

3 " under 16

3 females over 16

3 " under 16

3 blacks

Probate Record of Job Smith: Prov. A 2041

admitted in Johnston Probate Court 1818

Executors were Benjamin Smith & Susan Smith of Johnston, before the  
estate was settled Susan married Nathan Brown & Benjamin  
died, Dec. 29, 1824, leaving Susan & Nathan Brown as sole  
Executors.

A 1822 Accounting by Benjamin Smith included the following cash additions:  
"By Amount Land sold J.B.Mason \$2,000.00"



#362 Benefit Street

Job & Daniel Smith, con't

"By Amount Land sold Asa Newell \$295.00" \*  
"By Amount Land sold J. Whipple & Wm. Angell \$309.40" \*\*  
"By Amount Land sold Smith Bowen \$337.94"  
"By Amount Land sold Thomas Smith \$100.00" \*\*\*

\* North Prov. Land Ev. Deed Book 4:653 - 3 acres of  
land south of Killingly Road

\*\* Prov. Land Ev. Deed Book 45:193 - land south of  
Killingly Road

\*\*\* North Prov. Land Ev. Deed Book 4:647 - 1+ acre on  
Turnpike to Conn.

reference: John Smith, The Miller of Providence, R.I.: Some of His  
Decendants

Charles William Farnham  
at RIHS Library

pg.13...Benjamin

pg.30...Daniel

pg.67...Job....his children pg.67-69

#362 Benefit Street

Sheffield Smith

Sheffield Smith sold the property in question to Peter McSherry in 1871. There are no apparent records of his purchase of the property in either North Prov. or in Prov.. There are no records to suggest that he had inherited the property from his father, William Smith. The question of inheritance from his wife's family is open, although his mother-in-law's name is known the given name of his father-in-law is not. Sheffield Smith was not directly related to the family of Daniel/Job Smith.

Available Vital Records from Prov. and North Prov. provide the following information on Smith:

Sheffield Smith, born in Conn. ca.1810, son of William & Alice Smith died Oct.24,1890, in Prov., age 80

married Sally A. Sweet ca. 1830  
she was born in 1814

they had at least 6 children:

Alice N., born 1830

Henry S., born 1837

Joseph W., born 1851

Sheffield Jr., born 1854

Thomas O., date of birth unknown

Allen B., date of birth unknown

1908 City Atlas for Prov. indicates that J.W.Smith owned the large tract of land previously owned by Sheffield Smith.

Probate Records of Sheffield Smith: Prov. A 17241

gives the same list of heirs indicated above

Executors: Alice M. Smith, Joseph W. Smith, Henry S. Smith

The will, recorded in Prov. Will Book 34:50, left the entire estate to his wife, Sally, until her death. After such time the estate was left to Sheffield's 3 sons, Joseph, Henry & Sheffield Jr. The will specifically included the right to hold, sell and convey all real estate in the "estate".

Various accountings in the probate record included the following notes of interest:

January 5,1892:

"to pay Robert McSherry for 6 days labor.....\$9.00"

"to pay Robert McSherry for 6 days labor.....\$9.00"

---the above entry appeared a total of 6 times---

"to pay Edward McSherry for 8 days labor.....\$16.00"

March 11,1892

"billed to Edward McSherry for hay.....\$34.46"

"paid by Edward McSherry for milk bill....\$203.04"

Census Information:

1840 - the household of Sheffield Smith:

2 males under 5

1 " age 5-10

1 " age 20-30

1 female age 20-30

#362 Benefit Street

Sheffield Smith, con't.

1865 -vol.7,pg 301

- the household of Sheffield Smith:

<u>name</u>	<u>age</u>	<u>place of birth</u>	<u>occupation</u>
Sheffield Smith	55	Conn.	laborer
Sally A.	51	Johnston	
Henry S.	28	N.Prov.	
Alice	35	N.Prov.	
Joseph W.	14	N.Prov.	
Sheffield C.	11	N.Prov.	
Mary Rogers	16	N.Prov.	

- the census indicates their address as a wooden house at  
#241 Smith Street

North Prov. Tax Book 1842, compiled by John Weeden, pg. 15  
Sheffield Smith was assessed tax of \$7.16 for real estate

Probate Records of Sila Sweet: North Prov. Probate Book 6:39,45,46,47,52,53,59,  
60 &64.

Silla Sweet was the mother-in-law of Sheffield Smith. At the time of her death she left the folling direct heirs: one son, Henry Sweet; and 2 daughters, Emily Barnes, wife of Nelson Barnes, and Sally A. Smith, wife of Sheffield Smith. There is no date of death given, however the case was first presented for probate Sept.2,1844. In her last will and testament, given on page 47, she declares herself of sound mind but weak of body and makes the following provisions:

- 1st: son Henry was to recieve \$70.00 and various linen & quilts
- 2nd: daughter Emily, wife of Nelson Barnes was to recieve 2 feather beds
- 3rd: daughter Sally, wife of Sheffield Smith, was to recieve 1 feather bed
- 4th: daughters Emily and Sally were to share the residue equally

The will was dated May 1,1844. The inventory of the estate, which included mostly linens(found on pg.53) also included a number of outstanding notes, of which the following are of interest: (calculated with interest to Oct.12,1844)

Nelson Barnes	24 Oct. 1843	\$206.31
Sheffield Smith	27 June 1844	\$101.75

#362 Benefit Street

Maps and Atlases

- 1724 "Plat of Common Lands, 1724" see copy
- 1846 Topographical Map of State of R.I., by James Stevens (at RISH Lib.)  
- shows 2 small structures, only tentative identification
- 1851 Walling Map of City of Prov. (at City Archives)  
- possible identification of structures
- 1853 Map of the Town of North Prov., surveyed & published by C.J.Lorican & J.H.Christe  
- shows 4 small structures on "Chalkstone Road"
- 1870 Beers Atlas of R.I., North Prov., plate 25 (at RISH Lib.) see copy
- 1875 Prov. City Atlas, see copy
- 1882 Prov. City Atlas, see copy
- 1895 Prov. City Atlas, see copy
- 1918 Prov. City Atlas, see copy
- 1908 Prov. City Atlas, plate 27  
- J.W.Smith owns 487,497 sq.feet surrounding property in question  
- #877-879 structure shown, 7677 sq.foot lot and 4123 sq. foot lot, owner: P.McSherry, structure shown
- 1918 Prov. City Atlas, plate 31  
- #877 Heirs of P.McSherry, 7677 sq.foot lot, w/ structure  
- no number Lot 4123 sq.feet J.McSherry
- 1926 Prov. City Atlas, Hopkins, plate 31  
- 877-879 7677 sq.feet structure shown, J.McSherry,  
- lot 4123 sq.feet, no structures, J.McSherry
- 1937 Prov. City Atlas, Hopkins, plate 31  
- #877-879, 7677 sq.feet, structure shown, M.J.McSherry  
- #881, 4123 sq.feet, structure shown, M.J.McSherry

Plat Map #66 - North Prov. Records (found in Pawtucket)

"APlat of Mr. Sheffield Smith's House lots situated in North Prov. on the Chalkstone Hill Road so called and lies about  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile northwest of the Wonasquetucket (D---t ??) Works. And was surveyed April 8, 1854 and platted from a scale 50' to the 1" by Samuel Angell, surveyor."

Recorded May 20, 1854

\* This is land south of Chalkstone bounded by Canton St., Bergen St., and Ceylon St.

Plat Map #175 - "Plat of House Lots belonging to Sheffield Smith" situated in North Prov., surveyed and platted by N.B.Schubarth, Nov. 18, 1870. Recorded Feb. 8, 1878.

\* This is property north of the Chalkstone Road, between Tiffany and River Ave., ie. just west of the parcel he split with McSherry.

\* see North Prov. Deed Book 19:419 from Waterman B. Angell 1853

1823 Daniel Anthony Map of Prov. does not include the property in question.

PROV. PROVIDENCE TAX BOOK 1842

JOHN H. WEEGEN

14

NAMES.	Real.	Pers.	Total.
Randall Stephen, Jr.	7 16	1 79	8 95
Randall Stephen (Olneyville)	1 44		1 44
Randall William	15 22	3 58	18 80
Randall William (Olneyville)	27		27
Randall Whipple	5 38		5 38
Rand Franklin, assignee	1 62		1 62
Rawson Ann B., widow		1 79	1 79
Read Amos M.	6 71		6 71
Read Amos M. and John B.	13 42		13 42
Read Mary, widow	97		97
Read Lucina	1 35		1 35
Read Patience	1 62		1 62
Records Gardner		1 79	1 79
Randall Mowry	88		88
Richards Ira, or George Nicholas	2 68		2 68
Reservoir Proprietors	88		88
Ripley Charles	1 79		1 79
Rotch William, or Adam Anthony	23 71		23 71
Rotch Lydia	2 15		2 15
Robinson Dan	2 15		2 15
Rex Jeremiah	1 79		1 79
Richmond William E. (Providence)	1 79		1 79
Richmond George	36		36
Rhodes Wm. N.	19 68	54	20 22
Randall Sarah	13 42	1 79	15 21
S.			
Saunders Israel	26 83		26 83
Salsbury Smith	1 79		1 79
Salsbury Joseph	27		27
Salla Susan B. and children	2 15		2 15
Sampson Abial M., Earl or Uriah	1 79		1 79
Sayles Clark	19 68		19 68
Searle Nathaniel, heirs	88		88
Shepard John	5 37		5 37
Slater Esther, widow	9 85	23 72	32 57
Slater Samuel, heirs	12 53		12 53
Smith Daniel	16 11	2 15	18 26
Smith Hazael	5 82		5 82
Smith Abby C., widow	3 58	1 79	5 37
Smith Abigail	2 15	1 44	3 59
Smith Rebecca and Mowry	4 03		4 03

15

NAMES.	Real.	Pers.	Total.
Smith Iiram	3 23		3 23
Smith Benjamin, guardian	2 33		2 33
Smith Hannah and Fenner Angell	2 15		2 15
Smith John F.	7 61	9 40	17 01
Smith Freelove, heirs	72		72
Smith John K.	1 35		1 35
Smithfield Turnpike Company	72		72
Smith Sheffield	7 16		7 16
Smith John E.		72	72
Smith John W. (Providence)	45		45
Smith Jennison (machinery)		4 47	4 47
Smith William A., heirs	1 08		1 08
Sisson Joseph, Sen., Samuel & Joseph T.	4 47		4 47
Spencer Gideon L.	14 32	10 74	25 06
Staples William R.	18		18
Steam Wooten Factory, Philip Allen	54		54
Steele Asa	5 82	45	6 27
Stetson Isaac	1 79		1 79
Sweet Daniel A.	45		45
Sweet Daniel D.	4 03		4 03
Sweet William A.	18		18
Swan Charles E.	5 74	2 15	7 89
Sweetland Aretus, widow and heirs	3 58		3 58
Smith Mary or Jennison	1 79		1 79
Sweetland Cornelius S.	81		81
Sumner F. A., wife's trustee	8 05		8 05
Steele Eliza J.	18		18
Sweet Philip	1 08		1 08
Steele Asahel	2 68		2 68
Sanders Thomas	27		27
Smith William	18		18
Smith Scott, wife's estate	2 15		2 15
Spencer & Wilbur		3 58	3 58
Stokes John	81		81
Sweet Brown, heirs	1 79		1 79
Spalding Sarah	72		72
T.			
Taylor Edward, heirs	72		72
Taft George	3 58		3 58
Taintor John, wife's estate	2 68		2 68
Taber Ichabod, heirs	3 23		3 23

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1842

## 1780 FARMHOUSE MAY HAVE HAD ITS LAST CENTENNIAL

(Providence Bulletin, August 19, 1981)

Thom Mulligan

At the moment, the abandoned grey duplex at 877-879 Chalkstone Avenue bears little resemblance to the historic Colonials that grace Benefit Street.

Unless you know something about architecture, the only plaque you might expect to find on its dingy asbestos shingles would be one that warns "no trespassing."

But some historic preservation buffs say that the house is a diamond in the rough, a gambrel-roofed farmhouse built before 1780, when Chalkstone Avenue was a little country road.

They also say that it is a shame that the house will be demolished next Monday.

"I don't believe there are more than two dozen pre-Revolutionary houses in Providence," Barbara Gwynne said yesterday. "I think it's just a rare little house. It could be just a beguiling, marvelous, historic house."

Mrs. Gwynne, a Little Compton resident, is a member of the Providence Preservation Society and of Hill Reality, a corporation whose volunteer members arrange the restoration of old houses and try to find buyers for them. The Chalkstone Avenue house is Mrs. Gwynne's project, and she said she came heartbreakingly close to saving it.

The 1-1/2 story house, near Roger Williams General Hospital, is owned by the hospital. The hospital is planning to put a new outpatient clinic on the site, and cannot afford to delay the project any longer.

"We've been stalling since June, and my construction costs keep going up," Orlando J. Bisbano, the hospital's vice president for operations, said last night. "Reluctantly, we just had to draw the line."

Hospital officials have offered to give the house to anyone who will move it. They have delayed the demolition date twice. A new deadline, which Bisbano said is final, is Monday.

A couple was ready and eager to move the house to the College Hill historic district, Mrs. Gwynne said, but they backed off when they learned that it would cost up to \$50,000

just to move it. One of the biggest expenses--about \$19,000--would be to move telephone company wires out of the way.

Mrs. Gwynne heard about the house last spring after someone at the hospital had a hunch that it might be special and contacted the Preservation Society.

The preservationists who toured the building were thrilled to see a huge beehive-shaped brick oven in the basement and several beautifully crafted fireplaces in the upper floors.

Over the years, several changes were made in the house. Dormers were added to bring extra light to the second floor, asbestos shingles were tacked over the original clapboards, the brick foundation was covered with stucco, a doorway was added and the house was widened by about one-third.

Nevertheless, the house is sound and, "It's not that big a deal to restore that house so that it would knock your eyes out," another member of Hill Realty, who asked not to be identified, said yesterday.

"We're not mad at anybody," he added, "but it's just very frustrating."

The preservationists said that they do not want to place blame, but they added that the telephone company could do a service to the community by lowering its fee for moving its cables.

William H. Kelley, assistant to the general manager of New England Telephone, said the firm's first obligation is to its customers, and they are the ones who would wind up paying for any such largesse.

Kelley acknowledged that Narragansett Electric Company's fee for moving its wires was much lower but said, "Our cost is higher because our wires are much more complicated."

He said there are two huge cables in the path of the house, one with 900 pairs of wires wrapped into it and another with 1,200 pairs. Each pair of wires would have to be spliced to allow the house to pass beneath them, and the cables cross the road several times. The \$19,000 estimate "was not frivolous," he said.

## 200-YEAR-OLD FARMHOUSE SPARED AS DEMOLITION CREW IS HEADED OFF.

(Providence Journal, August 25, 1981)

By BOB WYSS, Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer.

PROVIDENCE--A 200-year-old historic farmhouse on Chalkstone Avenue appeared on safe ground yesterday--until the demolition crew showed up.

Officials for Roger Williams General Hospital, which owns the gray duplex at 877-879 Chalkstone Avenue, have been trying for months to find a new owner who would move it so the hospital could build a new out-patient clinic. Although the house was being offered free, it could cost up to \$50,000 to move it.

Last week, officials said time was running out and that the structure would come down yesterday.

That prompted a flurry of protests from preservationists, who called it "a beguiling, marvelous-historic house." That convinced Mayor Vincent A. Cianci Jr. to save the structure, and he announced the city would not issue a demolition permit.

Orlando J. Bisbano, the hospital's vice president of operations, said the publicity convinced the hospital to back off and on Friday the demolition contractor was told not to touch the house.

"We're looking to work something out with the parties who have expressed interest in the house," he explained yesterday afternoon.

\* \* \*

BUT ONLY MINUTES after Bisbano finished explaining to a reporter that the house was safe, he received another report that a demolition crew had just pulled up with a crane and was getting ready to tear down the structure.

The hospital official said he raced the 400 yards from his office to the house. A crew from Bilray Demolition Co. of Johnston had finished knocking down some trees and a fence and was preparing to demolish the building when he arrived.

Bisbano, who only days before wanted the house down, now had to persuade the contractor not to raze it. "He said he had a contract and a permit and he was going to tear it down," Bisbano related. "I told him I was the owner and to slow down."

Raymond Santanelli, president of Bilray, reported later that he had obtained demolition permits from the city for the house at 877-879 Chalkstone. But Santanelli said his men only had orders



to tear down another building at 869 Chalkstone and a small office, both owned by the hospital.

Bisbano said he does not want anything torn down now until he finds out how much it will cost.

Officials for the city building inspection office could not be reached yesterday to confirm if a demolition permit was issued for 877-879 Chalkstone.

For now, the house is once again safe. But Bisbano was uncertain how long the hospital can wait for a new owner. "That's a relative thing," he said, when asked. "But I'd like to think it will only be weeks rather than months."

## HISTORIC HOUSE WILL BE MOVED TO BENEFIT STREET

(Providence Journal-Bulletin, September 11, 1981)

By DOUG CUMMING, Journal-Bulletin Staff Writer

PROVIDENCE--A 200-year-old house that was threatened by plans for a new outpatient clinic of Roger Williams General Hospital will have its roof surgically removed--to save its life.

The operation on the historic farmhouse at 877-879 Chalkstone Avenue will allow the house to be transported to Benefit Street in two parts without having to move telephone wires out of the way.

\* \* \*

ANGELA FISCHER of Boston, who received the house from the hospital for free after she agreed to have it moved, said she plans to put it on a lot on Benefit Street across from the home of her late father, John Nicholas Brown.

But she said that the moving schedule still has not been determined.

"There are two movers, but neither one seems to hold to a date," she said.

Mrs. Fischer said she plans to remove the roof so that the house will fit under telephone wires. Then the roof's original timbers will be put back on the house, she said.

The moving was to have started Sept. 14, but has been delayed, she said.

The \$50,000 cost of transporting the 1-1/2 story duplex in one piece previously had discouraged would-be owners. About \$19,000 of that price was to pay for moving telephone wires by using a complicated splicing procedure.

\* \* \*

MRS. FISCHER said she had been interested in acquiring the house several months ago, but gave up because of the estimated moving expense.

Since then, the hospital, the Providence Preservation Society and the Mayor's Office of Community Development (MOCD) have been trying to find a willing home-owner.

The new owner said that her contractor, August W. Mende, Inc. of Providence, will supervise the restoration of the house when it is moved to a lot between Williams and Power

Streets, opposite 357 Benefit Street. "We all decided it was a perfect configuration for this house," she said.

The lot was purchased from her father's estate by a corporation she formed several years ago, Ribrow Corp., which "buys and sells land in a small way."

The total cost of moving the house will be about \$30,000, she said. But half of that might be financed by a federal historic restoration grant from MOCD, she added.

THE ABANDONED BUILDING, shingled in gray asbestos, hardly looks like a candidate for Benefit Street, a street of old-fashioned street lamps and historic plaques. A member of the hospital's board first suggested last spring that it might have historic value.

"Then we contacted the (Providence) Preservation Society, who realized it was a gem of a place," said Maureen Keates, public relations director for the hospital. "We didn't realize it."

The society called it a "diamond in the rough," a gambrel-roofed remnant of the days when Chalkstone Avenue was a country lane. It has clapboard underneath the asbestos and several well-crafted fireplaces upstairs.

\* \* \*

DESPITE THE INTEREST of the hospital, the Preservation Society and the MOCD, the hospital set at least three deadlines for its demolition, citing the effect of inflation on construction costs for the new clinic. On Aug. 24, a wrecking crew appeared on the scene with a demolition permit from City Hall, five days after Mayor Vincent A. Cianci, Jr. said such a permit would not be issued.

## HAPPY SAGA OF AN OLD HOUSE

(Providence Journal Editorial, September 12, 1981)

It was a near thing, but that old house in Providence has escaped treacherous demolition and will find a new home.

The gambrel-roofed farmhouse on Chalkstone Avenue is two centuries old and considered a historical gem. It was about to be torn down by its owner, Roger Williams General Hospital, which is going to build a new clinic on the site. Efforts to save it seemed doomed. Even the idea of moving it to another location seemed too costly to consider.

As in an episode of "Perils of Pauline," rescue came along just in time. Mrs. Angela Fischer of Boston, a daughter of the late John Nicholas Brown, agreed to have the house moved to a lot on Benefit Street, across from the Brown house. And, in a neat wrinkle, the prohibitive expense of moving overhead wires (as much as \$19,000, by one estimate) will be avoided by slicing off the roof (temporarily) and allowing the building to be moved in two sections. Once the house is in place on its new lot, the roof will be put back in place. The moving day (yet to be determined) should provide some excitement for sidewalk superintendents all along the route from Chalkstone Avenue to the East Side.

It's a happy ending to what had seemed to be a sad story. The hospital proved most cooperative, even to the point of sending an official out to halt a demolition crew that had arrived to start wrecking the house. The Mayor's Office of Community Development and the Providence Preservation Society worked together to find a way to save the little house. Mrs. Fischer's interest provided the needed solution to save a valuable piece of the city's past. Happy days. Happy house. Three cheers.