

**PPS RECORDS FOR**

**182-184 CYPRESS STREET  
PLAT 6, LOT 596**

**(previously 170-172 CYPRESS STREET, and formerly part of Lot 149)**

**ALEXANDER HAWKINS HOUSE  
Built 1887**

**DESCRIPTION:**

182-184 Cypress Street is a 3-story, Second Empire style, 2-family house. The slate mansard roof has pedimented dormers, each with a decorative fleur-de-lis-like design carved into the pediments. The cornice underneath the roof is deep and bracketed; the walls are wood clapboards. Both entrances are recessed within open porches and set back from the plane of the façade facing Cypress Street. #182 has a 2-story bay window on Cypress Street. All the building's windows are regularly spaced, wood 1-over-1 double hung sash.

The 2-story outbuilding at the rear of the lot, facing Ives Street, may originally have been a carriage house but has been much modified for conversion to residential use. It features a flat roof, bracketed cornice, and irregular fenestration, including three sets of double doors: one on the first floor facing north onto a small patio, and two on the second floor, one facing west with a shallow metal railing across its lower half, and the other facing north onto a small cantilevered deck. The main entrance, a single leaf wood panelled door, faces west onto Ives Street.

Both buildings stand on an 8,400 square foot lot on the north side of Cypress Street and the east side of Ivy Street. The lot measures 60 feet wide on Cypress Street and 140 feet deep on Ivy Street, and is located at the northeast corner of the intersection. The block is bounded by Cypress on the south, Ivy on the west, Larch Street on the north and Catalpa Road on the east.

**HISTORY:**

Alexander Hawkins was in his early seventies when he moved to Providence from New York in 1886 and purchased a 9,000 square foot vacant lot at the northeast corner of Cypress and Ivy Streets. The following year, he built a double house with the street address 170-172 Cypress Street. Hawkins moved into #170 and rented out #172 until his death in late 1894. In 1896, the street was renumbered and the house became identified as 182-184 Cypress. That same year, a Harriet Van Cott began living at #182; she bought the property by 1912, and lived there until her death in the late 1930s. Since 1940 the house has changed hands eleven times, most recently being purchased by the current owner, Parker Smith, in 1992.

**DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT<sup>1</sup>:**

In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the East Side was very remote from the settled area of Providence and had limited accessibility or appeal for residential living. Large farmsteads and country estates occupied most of the area east of Hope Street and north of Olney Street for

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<sup>1</sup> From "Historic and Architectural Resources of the East Side, Providence," by Robert Owen Jones, published by the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission, 1989.

nearly 200 years. It was not until the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century that advances in public transportation began to make development of outlying areas more feasible, just as the concept of living in less urban, more naturalistic settings began to become a popular ideal.

In 1848 a farmstead that had belonged to the Fenner family since at least the late 18<sup>th</sup> century was subdivided for residential development by the heirs of Governor James Fenner, who had died in 1846. The plat was located between today's Camp Street on the west and Morris Avenue on the east, stretching from Locust Street on the south to Woodbine Street on the north. (In a direct play to the emerging suburban ideal, the plat is entitled "A Plat of Cottage and Villa Lots," and all of the cross streets are named for trees or other verdant images.) Many of the house lots remained empty for decades, but once streetcar service was extended to the northern reaches of the East Side in the 1880s, development occurred more quickly.

## DESIGNATIONS

182-184 Cypress is not listed on the National Register of Historic Places, nor located within a local historic district zone.

## RECORDS *(All Records were found in Providence City Hall unless otherwise noted).*

### Maps and Atlases

1798: "A Map of Owners of Lots in Providence," compiled by Henry B. Chace in 1912: Plate VII shows part of the "Aplin Farm," a 36-acre tract owned by Arthur Fenner, bounded by the Old Road to Pawtucket (Morris Avenue) on the east, and Green or Horse Pasture Lane (Camp Street) on the west. The southern line of Fenner's property meets the three-way intersection of the Pawtucket Road, Cat Swamp Lane, and Olney Street; today, this would line up roughly with Cypress and Sessions Streets. *(Archives)*

1848: "A Plat of Cottage and Villa Lots on the East Turnpike belonging to the Heirs of Gov. James Fenner," surveyed by Atwater, Schubarth and Haines and recorded June 20, 1848 in Plat Book 2, Page 20, copied on card 62. The map shows Locust, Cypress, Larch, Forest, Evergreen, and Woodbine Streets running east/west, and Green (Camp) and Ivy Streets, the East Turnpike (Hope Street) and the Old Road to Pawtucket (Morris Avenue) running north/south. The block where 182-184 Cypress now stands was bounded by Cypress on the south, Ivy on the west, Larch on the north, and the East Turnpike on the east; Catalpa Road does not appear on this map. The vacant lot at the northeast corner of Cypress and Ivy is numbered #174 and measures 50 feet on Cypress and 150 feet on Ivy (7,500 sq. ft.). *(Registry of Deeds)*

1875: "Atlas of the City of Providence," by G.M. Hopkins Co., Vol. 1 (Ward1), Plate H shows the block bounded by Cypress, Ivy, Larch and East Avenue (Hope Street). Lot #174 at the northeast corner of Cypress and Ivy, containing 7,500 sq. ft., is vacant and owned by Asa Pike. The entire block is empty at this time. *(Archives)*

1882: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 3, shows the same configuration on this block, with Lot #174 still vacant. The entire western half of the block is owned by Mary A.P. Lyon. The map refers to the "James Fenne Plat," obviously a misspelling. *(Archives)*

1895: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by Everts & Richards, Plate 28, shows a large wooden house constructed at the northeast corner of Cypress and Ivy, numbered 170 Cypress Street. A wooden outbuilding (presumably the existing carriage house) stands north of the main house. The lot measures 9,000 sq. ft., so has been enlarged since the original plat was laid out in 1848. Cypress Street has sewer lines from North Main to Ivy Streets; there are streetcar lines on both Hope and North Main Streets. Only one other house has been built in this block, at the corner of Ivy and Larch. (*Archives*)

1902: Assessors Plat Maps, Plat 6 shows that the lot at the northeast corner of Cypress and Ivy is numbered #149. The lot measures 60 feet on Cypress and 150 feet on Ivy, for a total of 9,000 sq.ft. (*Archives*)

1908: "Atlas of the City of Providence" by L.J. Richards Co., plate 11: The house's address has been changed to 182-184 Cypress Street. The 9,000 sq. ft. lot with house and outbuilding is now owned by R.I. Hospital Trust Co. Catalpa Road has been cut through the middle of the block from Cypress to Larch Streets. (*Archives*)

1918, 1926 and 1937: "Atlases of the City of Providence" by G.M. Hopkins Co., Plate 24 shows the house and outbuilding at 182-184 Cypress Street, on a 9,000 sq.ft. lot owned by H.A. Van Cott. (*Archives*)

The lot was reduced to its current 8,400 sq. ft. by selling off 10 feet from the northern end of the lot (see Assessor's Field Cards – the lot was subdivided in 1968).

#### Intent to Build Records (*Archives*)

Permit #4254, dated March 21, 1887, indicates the intention of Alexander Hawkins to build a 3-story wood 2-tenant dwelling at the northeast corner of Cypress and Ivy Streets.

#### Tax Records (*Archives*)

##### Index

1854: Philip H. Durfee owned Plat 6, Lot 149 as of August 1, 1854.

1866: Asa Pike owned Plat 6, Lot 149 as of August 15, 1866.

1881: Mary A.P. Lyon, wife of Ezra P. Lyon, owned Plat 6, Lot 149 as of July 2, 1881.

1885: Reuben F. Eaton, of Foxboro Center, Mass., owned Plat 6, Lot 149 as of November 2, 1885.

1886: Mary A.P. Lyon, wife of Ezra P. Lyon, owned Plat 6, Lot 149 as of June 1, 1886.

1886: Estate of Alexander Hawkins of New York, R.I. Hospital Trust Co., Trustee, owned Plat 6, Lot 149 as of August 2, 1886.<sup>2</sup>

##### Tax Lists

1887: Alexander Hawkins of New York owned Plat 6, Lot 149, which was assessed at \$1,260.

1888: Alexander Hawkins of New York owned Plat 6, Lot 149, which was assessed at \$10,560, clearly indicating that the house had been constructed since the previous assessment.

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<sup>2</sup> The mention of Alexander Hawkin's "Estate" in the tax index is somewhat confusing, as clearly he was not deceased in 1886. However, he was in his early 70s at the time; possibly the bank managed his business affairs for him.

Directories (Archives)

City Directories 1887 and 1888: Alexander Hawkins boarded at 280 Broad Street.<sup>3</sup>

City Directory, 1889: Alexander Hawkins boarded at 170 Cypress Street.

City Directories, 1890-1894: Alexander Hawkins resided at 170 Cypress Street.

City Directory 1895: Alexander Hawkins died December 11, 1894. Hope A. Ketchum lived at 170 Cypress Street (her first appearance in the directories). Chester F. Upham, a commercial broker, moved to 172 Cypress from his previous residence on Larch Street.

City Directory 1896: Hope A. Ketchum lived at 182 Cypress (the address changed), with a boarder named John D. Van Cott. Chester Upham continued to live at 184 Cypress until 1899.

City Directory 1897: Harriet A. Van Cott joins Hope Ketchum and John Van Cott in residence at 182 Cypress.

House Directory 1895 (its first year of publication): Hope A. Ketchum lived at 170 Cypress Street; no listing is given for #172.

House Directory 1896: Hope A. Ketchum and John D. Van Cott (boarder) lived at 182 Cypress; Chester F. Upham lived at #184.

Assessor's Field Cards (Assessor's Office)*Field Card for AP 6, Lot 149: CYPRESS STREET*

Alexander Hawkins (NY) Estate and RI Hospital Trust Co, Trustee	owner as of August 2, 1886
Harriet A. Van Cott	owner as of February 1, 1912
Harriet A. Van Cott Estate	owner as of January 1939
Ethel M. Hamblett	owner as of January 1940
Ethel M. Hamblett Estate	owner as of November 1941
Dorothy Dorman	owner as of December 1941
Dorothy Watson	owner as of June 15, 1945
John V. Harrington and wife Mary M. Harrington, as Joint Tenants	owner as of February 1947
Mary M. Harrington	owner as of December 1951

LOT SUBDIVIDED INTO LOTS 596 and 597 (Ref. Deed Book 1147, Page 136), April 24, 1968.

*Field Card for AP 6, Lot 596: IVY & CYPRESS STREETS*

Mary M. Harrington	owner as of April 24, 1968 (DB 1147, p. 136)
Benjamin Weiss and James Weiss, as Tenants in Partnership	owners as of July 28, 1970 (DB 1158, p. 437 and DB 1157, p. 1064)
Pleasant Realty Co.	owner as of May 17, 1972 (DB 1167, P. 412)

<sup>3</sup> No profession for Alexander Hawkins is indicated in any city directory 1887-1894; given his age, he likely was retired.

Youn Kyung Lee and Youn Ok Kim as  
Joint Tenants  
Pietro Doran, Youn Kyung Lee and  
Youn Ok Kim  
Old Stone Bank  
Parker E. Smith

owners as of June 28, 1985 (DB 1297, p. 118)

owners as of March 23, 1989 (DB 1994, p. 118)

owner as of September 6, 1991 (DB 2447, p. 203)

owner as of April 10, 1992 (DB 2544, p. 295)

*Research compiled by Kathryn J. Cavanaugh  
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