

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Massachusetts	
COUNTY: Barnstable	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
	FEB 23 1972

1. NAME

COMMON:
First Universalist Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Church of the Redeemer

2. LOCATION Congressional District 12

STREET AND NUMBER:
236 Commercial Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Provincetown

STATE Massachusetts	CODE 025	COUNTY: Barnstable	CODE 001
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
☐ District ☐ Site ☒ Building ☐ Structure ☐ Object	☐ Public ☒ Private ☐ Both	☒ Occupied ☐ Unoccupied ☐ Preservation work in progress	Yes: ☒ Restricted ☐ Unrestricted ☐ No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Agricultural	☐ Government	☐ Park	☐ Transportation	☐ Comments
☐ Commercial	☐ Industrial	☐ Private Residence	☐ Other (Specify)	
☐ Educational	☐ Military	☒ Religious		
☐ Entertainment	☐ Museum	☐ Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
First Universalist Parish

STREET AND NUMBER:
236 Commercial Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Provincetown

STATE:
Massachusetts

CODE
025

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
Barnstable County Registry of Deeds

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Barnstable	STATE: Massachusetts	CODE 025
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (continuation sheet)

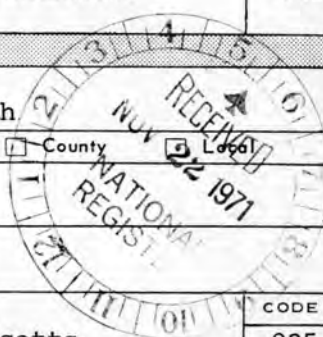
TITLE OF SURVEY:
Inventory of Historic Assets of the Commonwealth

DATE OF SURVEY: 1970 ☐ Federal ☒ State ☐ County

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Massachusetts Historical Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:
Office of the Secretary, State House

CITY OR TOWN: Boston	STATE: Massachusetts	CODE 025
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STATE: Mass.	COUNTY: Barnstable
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE FEB 23 1972

FOR NPS USE ONLY

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

see
10-36-72
letter

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	☐ Excellent	☒ Good	☒ Fair	☐ Deteriorated	☐ Ruins	☐ Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	☐ Altered	☒ Unaltered	☐ Moved	☒ Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

In the spring of 1847, the First Universalist Church of Provincetown decided to build a new church in order to provide space for its growing congregation. The church, set slightly back from Commercial Street, is now crowded on all sides by late nineteenth and twentieth century buildings.

The exterior of the structure is walled with white clapboards and decorated with classical elements. The gable façade is divided into three bays by means of four giant pilasters decorated with recessed panels. These pilasters support a simple banded entablature and blank pediment. The entablature continues along the side elevations where it is supported by corner pilasters.

The central bay of the gable end contains a doorway flanked by smaller pilasters and headed by a shelf entablature. The fenestration in each flanking bay is composed of four sash windows placed 2 over 2. These are incorporated into a single large unit by a common lintel and sill. The unit is divided vertically by a mullion and horizontally by 2 panels with a meander motif. Three similar window units break each side elevation.

The three stage steeple, which rises from the roof of the auditorium, has been for many years incorrectly identified with the style of Sir Christopher Wren. However, the proportions, massing and handling of classical detail are pure Greek Revival, of which style the steeple is an excellent example.

The most significant feature of the church is the trompe l'oeil treatment of the auditorium. The wallpainting in egg tempera is the work of Carl Wendte, a young German artist. Wendte had traveled and studied in Italy which accounts for the Italianate flavor of the murals.

The focal point of the auditorium is the illusionary apse behind the pulpit. The apse is a typical basilican feature, as is the coffered dome which is painted in perspective on the ceiling. Roman motifs are used throughout the mural. The Corinthian order is used for the pilasters which divide the walls into bays; two-stage recessed panels have been painted between the bays; an entablature above the pilasters "supports" the flat arched and coffered ceiling; egg and dart molding outlines the coffers within the dome; and paterae decorate some of the coffers.

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| ☐ Pre-Columbian | ☐ 16th Century | ☐ 18th Century | ☐ 20th Century |
| ☐ 15th Century | ☐ 17th Century | ☒ 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1847

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| ☐ Aboriginal | ☐ Education | ☐ Political | ☐ Urban Planning |
| ☐ Prehistoric | ☐ Engineering | ☒ Religion/Philosophy | ☐ Other (Specify) _____ |
| ☐ Historic | ☐ Industry | ☐ Science | _____ |
| ☐ Agriculture | ☐ Invention | ☐ Sculpture | _____ |
| ☒ Architecture | ☐ Landscape Architecture | ☐ Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| ☒ Art | ☐ Literature | ☐ Theater | _____ |
| ☐ Commerce | ☐ Military | ☐ Transportation | _____ |
| ☐ Communications | ☐ Music | | |
| ☐ Conservation | | | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The First Universalist Church is the second home of the Unitarian parish founded in Provincetown in 1829. The church was begun in 1847 and, according to local sources, is the oldest building on the Lower Cape still in its original state and being used for its original purpose. The most significant features of the church are its elaborate three-stage tower, often (though incorrectly) called the "Christopher Wren Tower," and the trompe l'oeil paintings which decorate its ceilings and walls.

The Universalist Church was built by ship's carpenters under the supervision of Benjamin Hallet of Barnstable. The immediate model for the building, with the exception of the tower, was a small church constructed in Fall River, Massachusetts, in 1845. Only the entrance and auditorium of the Provincetown Church were finished in 1847; the remaining sections of the building were not completed until the 1860s.

The trompe l'oeil paintings of the auditorium are the work of a young German artist, Carl Wendte. Born in Verden, Hannover, in 1820, Wendte studied art in Siena, Italy, and became expert in the use of fresco and tempera. In 1841, Wendte and his wife came to America and settled in Boston. The painter's reputation gradually grew and his murals appeared in a number of New England churches. Wendte's work in the Universalist Church was done in egg tempera and shows the influence of his study of Italian churches. After leaving Provincetown, Wendte accepted a commission for a church in Boston; while working there he was stricken with pneumonia and died in 1848, at the age of 28.

The tracher organ, which was installed in the First Universalist Church in 1850, is the oldest on Cape Cod. Its carved wooden pilasters framing the organ pipes are copies of the pilasters which appear in Wendte's murals. The original chandelier still hangs in the church and has globes, fonts and prisms of Sandwich Glass.



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Barrie, Steve, A History of the First Universalist Church of Provincetown, Provincetown, 1971.

Smith, Simeon C., Leaves From an Old Church Record Book, Boston, Universalist Publishing House, 1922.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		42° 03' 03 1/2"	70° 11' 17"	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

c. 1 acre

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:

Anne R. Wardwell, Survey Director

ORGANIZATION

Massachusetts Historical Commission

DATE

August 27, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:

Office of the Secretary, State House

CITY OR TOWN:

Boston

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

025

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name

John F. X. Donovan
Secretary of the Commonwealth and
Chairman, Massachusetts Historical
Commission

Title

Date November 5, 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

James Allen Connolly
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date

FEB 23 1972

ATTEST:

William M. Neumeister
Keeper of The National Register

Date

FEB 7 1972

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



Barnstable

RECEIPT PROJECT First Universalist Church STATE Mass

DATE OF RECEIPT 11/22/71 YES 2 NO 42 REGISTER NUMBER: FEB 23 1972

DATA PAGE 2
PHOTO (S) 42
PHOTO DESCRIPTION (S) 1
MAP (S) 1
MAP DESCRIPTION (S) 1
LOGGED 11/22/71
ACKNOWLEDGE 11/22/71

RESUBMIT 11/22/71 Tech. 12/29/71 ok jlg

REVIEW

HISTORIAN OKy Sebs 1/22/72

ARCHAEOLOGIST

ARCHITECT OK Chamber 1-25-72

ASST. KEEPER

KEEPER OK Wm 2/7/72

WRITER/EDITOR OK manuscript 1/25/72

CHIEF, OAHF OK CD 2/2/72

EDITORIAL PROCESSING, EDITOR

Federal Register Entry 4-4-72 Annual Edition Entry

Logged FEB 23 1972 Card FEB 23 1972

COMMENTS: RECEIVED NOV 22 1971 NATIONAL REGISTER WORKING NUMBER: 11.22.71.2



Canby dist. # 12

UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, SHOWING SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN TOWER



PROVINCETOWN, MASS.

Provincetown Mass. The First Universalist Church - 236 Commercial St.

This is an enclosed Post Card

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

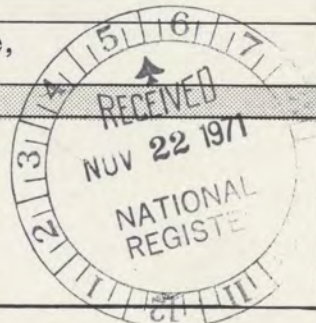
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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

STATE	
Massachusetts	
COUNTY	
Barnstable	
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	FEB 23 1972

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AND/OR HISTORIC: Church of the Redeemer			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER:			
236 Commercial Street			
CITY OR TOWN:			
Provincetown			
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
Massachusetts	025	Barnstable	001
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT: photo supplied by The Restoration Committee of the lower Cape			
DATE OF PHOTO: 1971			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: The Restoration Committee of the lower Cape, P.O. Box 603, Provincetown, MA 02657			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.			
① exterior - main façade			



PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Puruncetown Mass.

First Universalist Church
236 Commercial St.

This photograph was taken many
years ago. Photographer is unknown
It shows the altar and the
marvellous Tromp l'oeil niche.

NPS Number

Feb 23, 1972

Title:

First Universalist Church

Loc.

Barnstable County, Mass.

Auditorium interior

(2)

PROPERTY OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

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

STATE Massachusetts	
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Provincetown

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Massachusetts

CODE

025

COUNTY:

Barnstable

CODE

001

3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE:

U. S. G. S. : Provincetown, Mass.

SCALE: **1 : 24,000**

DATE: **1958**

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

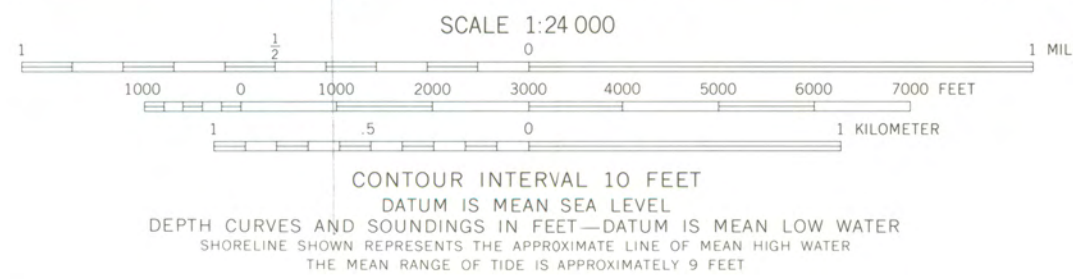
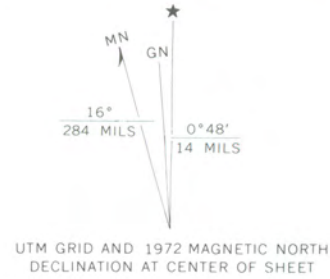
1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.





19/401 680
4655 890
60

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
Control by USGS, USC&GS, USCE, and Massachusetts Geodetic Survey
Planimetry by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs
taken 1938. Topography by planetable surveys 1941
Revised from aerial photographs taken 1971. Field checked 1972
Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Charts
580 (1972) and 1208 (1971). This information is not intended
for navigational purposes
Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on Massachusetts coordinate system,
mainland zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 19, shown in blue



ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Primary highway, hard surface ——— Light-duty road, hard or improved surface ———
Secondary highway, hard surface ——— Unimproved road ———
Interstate Route ——— U. S. Route ——— State Route ———

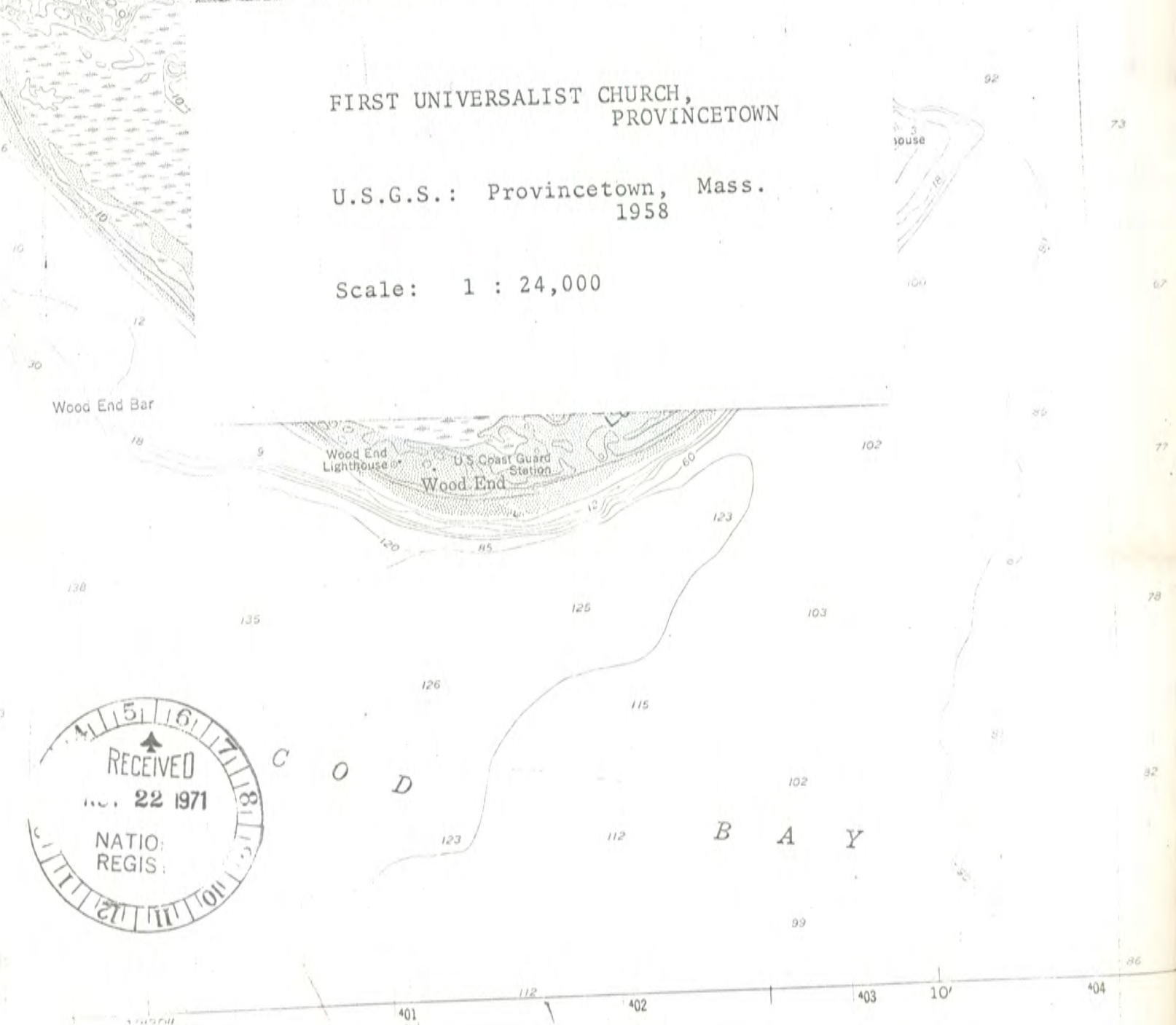
PROVINCETOWN, MASS.
N4200—W7007.5/7.5
1972

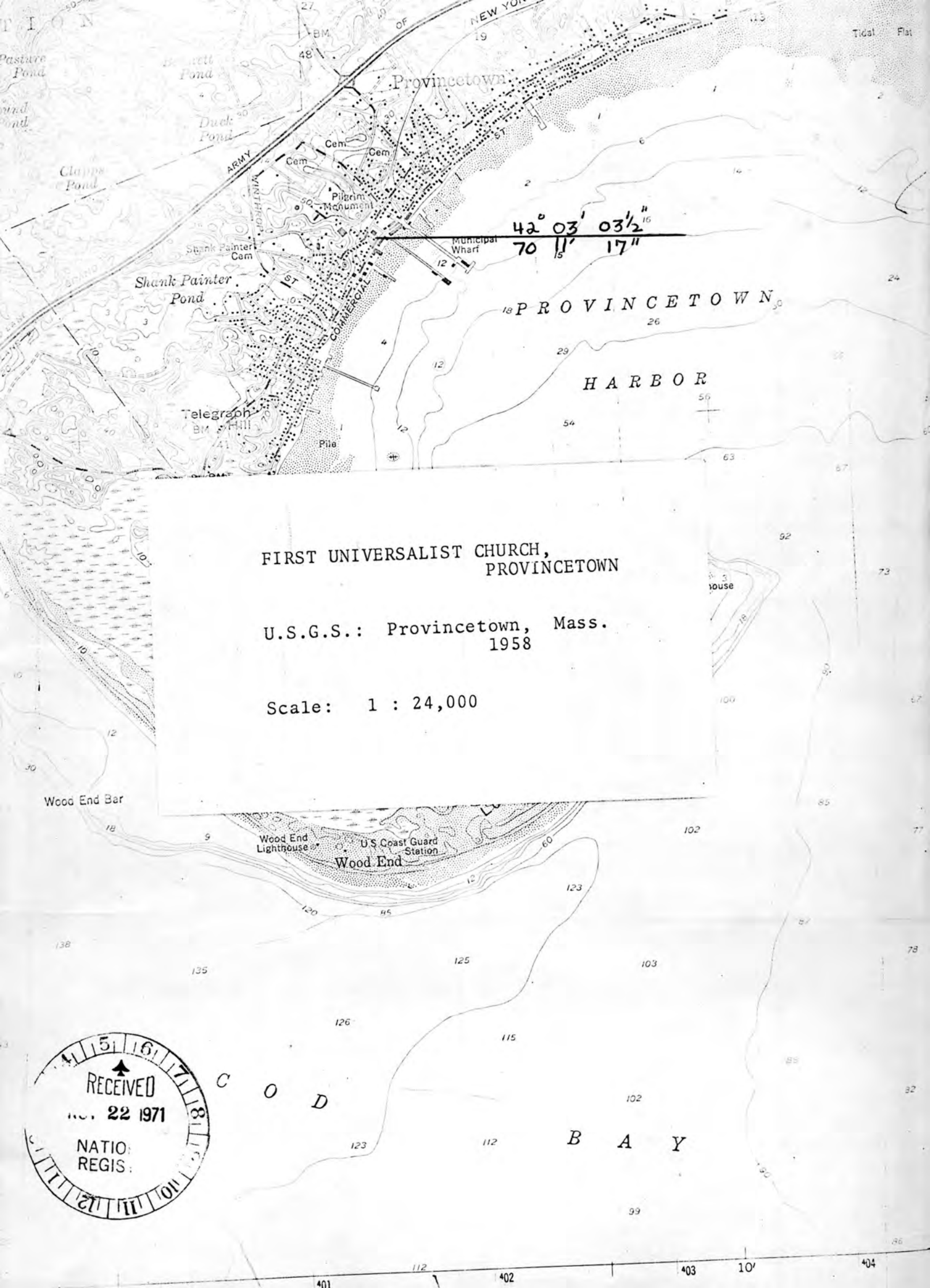


FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH,
PROVINCETOWN

U.S.G.S.: Provincetown, Mass.
1958

Scale: 1 : 24,000





Provincetown

42° 03' 03 1/2" N
70° 11' 17" W

PROVINCETOWN

HARBOR

FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH,
PROVINCETOWN

U.S.G.S.: Provincetown, Mass.
1958

Scale: 1 : 24,000



C O D

B A Y

ENTRIES IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

STATE MASSACHUSETTS

Date Entered FEB 23 1972

<u>Name</u>	<u>Location</u>
Merrell Tavern	South Lee Berkshire County
Northborough Town Hall	Northborough Worcester County
First Baptist Church	Boston Suffolk County
Old County Court House	Plymouth Plymouth County
Trinity Rectory	Boston Suffolk County
St. Luke's Episcopal Church	Lanesborough Berkshire County
Crowninshield House	Boston Suffolk County
First Universalist Church	Provincetown Barnstable County
Griswold (Major Joseph) House	Buckland Franklin County

Also Notified

Hon. Edward M. Kennedy
Hon. Edward W. Brooke
Hon. Silvio O. Conte
Hon. Harold D. Donohue
Hon. Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr.
Hon. Hastings Keith

State Liaison Officer
Hon. John F. X. Davoren
Secretary of the Commonwealth
Chairman, Massachusetts Historical
Commission
Office of the Secretary
State House
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Director, Northeast Region

HR

NRowland:mm

2/16/72

Sally
Norma
Collette



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of the Secretary

Massachusetts Historical Commission

3 Joy Street

Boston, Mass. 02108

October 30, 1972

orig. of
N. Easton
J. J. J.

John F. X. Davoren

Secretary of the Commonwealth

Mr. Jerry Rogers, Director of Registration
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
1100 L Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20005

Dear Jerry,

Re: Moval and demolition and changes to be made of
National Register properties in Massachusetts

The Loammi Baldwin Mansion, Woburn, Middlesex County, has been moved with an OAHF grant to Alfred Street, Woburn. A map indicating coordinates and new location is enclosed.

The Barnstable Old Jail, Barnstable, Barnstable County, was moved with and OAHF grant to Route 6A, Barnstable (next east to the Trayser Museum). A map indicating coordinates and new location is enclosed.

Foster's Block, 404-406 Main Street, Worcester, Worcester County, has been demolished. Your office is already aware that the Rotch Counting House, 123 Front Street, New Bedford, Bristol County, has also been demolished.

Enclosed, too, is an additional photograph of the North Easton Historic District, Easton, Bristol County, which National Register form is in your emergency or "quick" processing file.

Finally, a representative of the owner of the First Universalist Church, Provincetown, Barnstable County, has notified us that the condition of this building has changed from "good" to "fair".

Sincerely yours,

Anne Wardwell

Anne Wardwell
Survey Director

AW/plw
encls.

ms

FUNDED

FIRST UNIVERSALIST CHURCH (25-74-00100-00). *Provincetown, Barnstable Co.*
Private ownership (Church Parish). Greek Revival Church significant for its interior trompe d'oeil painting. Project work, including stabilization of the Church and bell tower. \$4,500.