

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island
COUNTY: Newport
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY NUMBER 9055
JAN 13 1972

1. NAME

COMMON:
Bell (Isaac) House

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Edna Villa

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
70 Perry Street

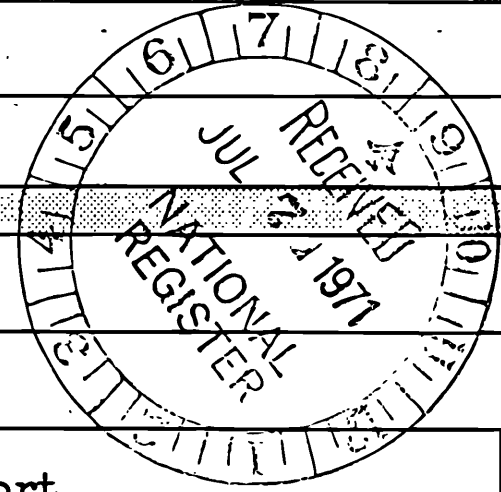
CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE
Rhode Island, 02840

CODE
44

COUNTY:
Newport

CODE
005



3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Clive B. Kimball and Mrs. Louise C. Kimball

STREET AND NUMBER:
70 Perry Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE:
Rhode Island

CODE
44

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:
City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:
Broadway

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE
Rhode Island

CODE
44

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Buildings Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1970
 Federal
 State
 County
 Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:
Independence Avenue and 1st Street, S. E.

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE:
District of Columbia

CODE
II

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

JAN 13 1972

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

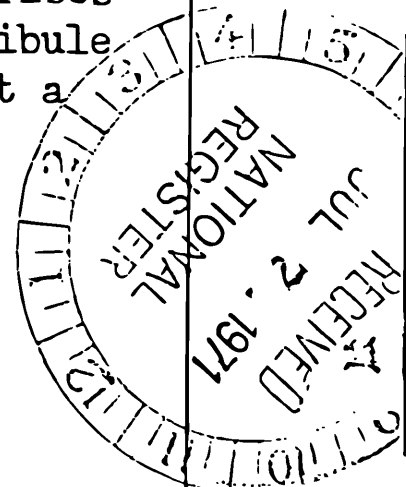
The Isaac Bell house was built in 1882-1883 from the designs of McKim, Mead & White. It is a three-storey, gabled structure of wooden balloon-frame construction upon a stone basement. Its first floor is faced in brick, while the upper wall surfaces and sloping roofs were covered by shingles--in some gables and other places made decorative by having rounded end or being laid on in undulating courses. It was built as a summer residence and has the open planning and numerous porches which began to characterise country and resort houses, particularly, in the 'eighties. The house may be said to front on Bellevue Avenue, facing east, where the major porches and a wide, low set of steps are placed, but the actual entrance is through a door and vestibule on the Perry Street side, to the south.

The east front of the house features two large, windowed third-storey gables side by side above a range of seven windows and a south-eastern corner oriel or angled bay window on the second floor. The first floor has three large windows and one wide triple window, all floor-length, irregularly spaced. Running across the front of the house is a shadowed, one-storey porch railed in brick. At the north-east corner of the house this porch is brought forward in a rounded projection with a second-storey, steep-roofed porch, railed in shingles, above. At the south-east the porch is pushed forth in a rectangular, gabled projection and is also extended part way around the side of the house, where it is stopped at a rounded three-storey bay. At this point are the steps and hood of the main entrance. A decorative feature of the house is the use of slender, tapered columns of bamboo-like form rising from the porch parapets to uphold the verandah roofs. Other intentionally picturesque exterior features are the very tall and irregularly-placed chimneys, the contrasting textures of brick and weathered shingles, the expanses of sloping roofs, the very small-paned (20 over 20) windows of the third floor--originally surmounted by wooden lunettes--and the small-paned upper sashes of windows on lower floors.

While this house can only be described as irregular in plan and shape, there is a basic, central, nearly-square space which on the first floor contains the large stair-hall or "living-hall," the small southern entrance vestibule and two drawing-rooms across the east front. Pushed out from this central area at the south-west corner is a bay which contains an almost semicircular study with bookshelving, while to the north are a dining-room (also opening to the east porch), with pantries backed by a kitchen and rear porch to the north-west. Vincent Scully describes the first floor in his The Shingle Style: "One enters through a vestibule into a great hall. To the right is a reception room and to the left a

(See Continuation Sheet)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

7. Description.

study tucked in near the hall fireplace, which is placed in an inglenook. The tremendous fireplace has an extended hearth running from the study wall to the great stairs. Beside the inglenook a post supports a transverse beam. Behind its span the stair well rises. From the stair landing a huge window ... lights the hall. Off the central space of the hall, drawing and dining rooms open widely and connect with the piazza through French doors. Thus the interior space is one of continuity through interwoven areas." He quotes George William Sheldon's Artistic Country Houses regarding décor: "The finish is in oak. ... Immediately around the fireplace is an extensive space of tiling, and a row of marble seats runs between the staircase and Mr. Bell's room study. ... Opposite the staircase, eight feet wide, appears an open transom, supported on carved brackets ... A beautiful and much carved screen, with panels of wood, separates the staircase from the fireplace ..." The ornamentation of the living-hall is much concentrated upon the fireplace and inglenook area where, in addition to carving, there is much ingenuity of detail in the use of small squares of glass--sometimes bevelled--and of tile, which occurred a year or two earlier with great success in McKim, Mead & White's dining room at Kingscote, nearby, and also in their Samuel Tilton house in Newport. On this first floor, much of the furniture, either built-in or movable, was designed by that firm especially for the house, and a good part survives.

The second and third floors are given over to master and guest bedrooms and to servants' chambers. Throughout the house in recent years some of the rooms have been divided into two spaces--without, however, altering or removing any original partitions or woodwork. Portions of the exterior have been re-shingled in a plainer manner than originally, and the roof now is covered by modern composition shingles.



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19th Century | |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1882-1883

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bell house is one of McKim, Mead & White's most successful works in the Queen Anne style and one of their most inventive and ingenious in the handling of free interior spaces designed for comfort, air, light, and easy entertaining--a notable break from the very separate, very defined and conventionally-placed halls and rooms of earlier periods. As such, it has received much mention, in its time and now, in books and articles on domestic architecture and is consistently pointed out as an outstanding break-through in residential design, both internally and externally.

In Newport, it is a landmark, being one of the first of the parade of summer residences, villas and palaces extending along Bellevue Avenue and giving that thoroughfare its beauty, character and fame. The loss of any one of these houses--especially one as distinguished and sensitive in design as the Bell house--would be an aesthetic disaster and most destructive to the Newport scene. And the loss of its trees and lawn would be equally disastrous, visually.

The Bell house has had various changes in ownership and use over recent decades, but so far its fabric has not suffered serious mishandling or deterioration. It is at the point now, however, when it might become run-down, might be seriously altered or even demolished unless it continues to have a sympathetic owner and receives the continuing good, average maintenance and repair it has enjoyed to date. (It is believed to be for sale.) It is still a very livable residence. With its lawn and trees, it is of visual importance in its area; and it has also become something of a minor monument in American architectural history.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Hitchcock, Henry-Russell, Jr.: Rhode Island Architecture (Providence, R. I., 1939), pp. 57-58, pl. 62.
 Scully, Vincent J., Jr.: The Shingle Style (New Haven, Conn., 1955), pp. 139-140, figs. 129, 130, 131.
 Downing, Antoinette F., and Scully, Vincent J., Jr.: The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, 1640-1915 (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), p. 152, pl. 205.

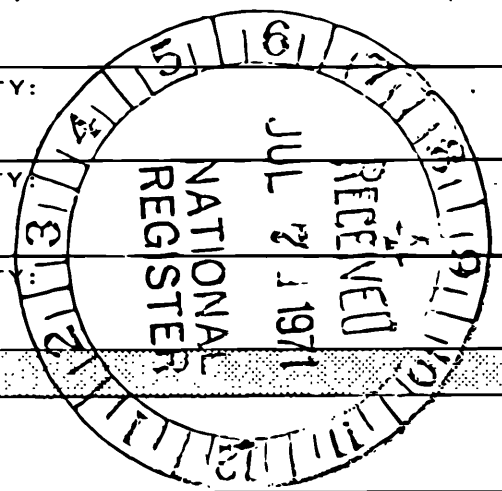
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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	
NW	° ' "	° ' "	41°	28'	45" N	
NE	° ' "	° ' "	71°	18'	34" W	
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Richard B. Harrington, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission DATE: March 3, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: State House, 90 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island CODE: 44

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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: Fredrick C. Wilkinson

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: July 1, 1971

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

Ernest A. Connolly
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date: JAN 13 1972

ATTEST:

William H. H. [Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

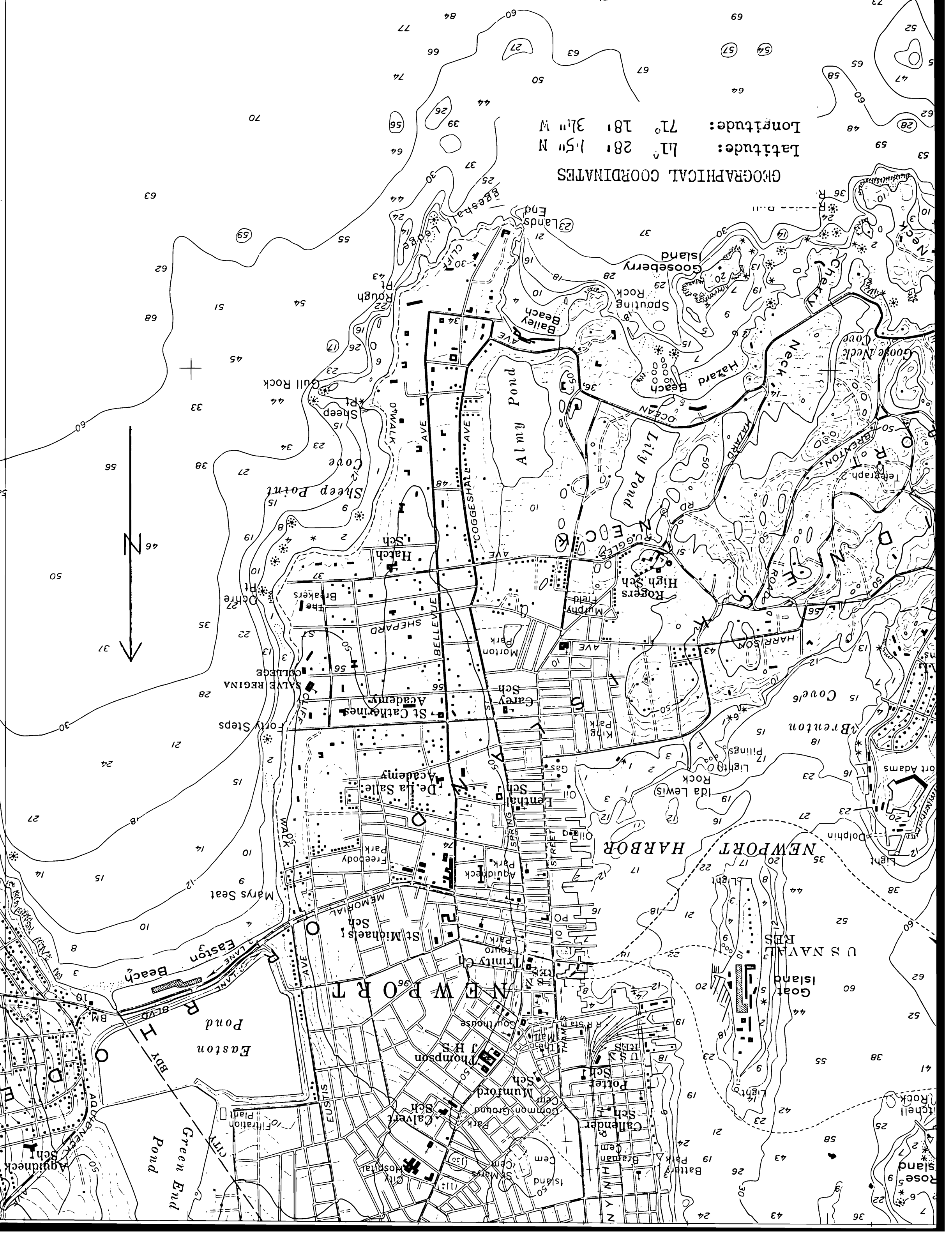
Date: JAN 3 1972

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

19/507150/10874000

GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES

Latitude: 28° 15' N
Longitude: 71° 18' W



Bell, Isaac, House

Newport County, Rhode Island

U.S. Geological Survey, 1:250,000, 1957