

| |
|-------------------------------|
| STATE: Rhode Island |
| COUNTY: Newport |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |
| ENTRY DATE |

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**
(Type all entries complete applicable sections)

1. NAME

COMMON:
Redwood Library

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Redwood Library

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
50 Bellevue Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
1st.

STATE: **Rhode Island** CODE: **44** COUNTY: **Newport** CODE: **005**

3. CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
|---|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object | <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 type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress |
| 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 type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <u>library</u> |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Redwood Library and Athenaeum

STREET AND NUMBER:
50 Bellevue Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE:
Rhode Island

CODE:
44

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Newport City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:
50 Bellevue Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE:
Rhode Island

CODE:
44

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Building Survey (3 photos, 5 sheets and 18 data pgs)

DATE OF SURVEY: **1937, 1970** Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Division of Prints and Photographs

STREET AND NUMBER:
Library of Congress/Annex

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE:
D.C.

CODE:
11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Rhode Island
COUNTY: Newport
ENTRY NUMBER:
DATE:
FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One) | | | | | |
| | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input 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 Redwood Library as originally built in 1747-1750, was a one-story frame building with one large central room, 26 feet wide by 36 feet long, with two small adjoining offices. The principal or west front forms a pedimented temple with a four columned Doric portic. The entablature surrounds the entire building. The two offices are placed as wings, connected to the main building to form two half-pediments, beginning at the lower part of the entablature. The east front had a plain Doric pediment with a range of three Venetian windows in an Ionic Order placed in three arches. The exterior of the building was wood cut to resemble rusticated stone. The Redwood Library is the earliest building in the colonies of definite date to use the motif, although the Shirley Eustus House at Roxbury Massachusetts may antedate it. The doorframe is beautifully ornamented with a shell and dolphin frieze, providing the only light decorative element on the exterior.

Harrison also used design books for the interior of the building. The elaborately architectonic bookcases seem to relate to Batty Langley's Treasury of Designs. The ceiling in the main room has a shallow molding design with a delicate dentiled cornice frieze around the room. The interior was restored in 1915 by Norman Isham.

Toward the rear of the spacious east lawn is a small octagonal garden pavilion erected on Abraham Redwood's Newport Estate in 1748 by Harrison. It is treated in a similar rusticated wood as the original part of the Library. Brought to the Library grounds in 1915 ~~it fits well into its new~~ surroundings. The gates at the north entrance are wrought-iron, dating from 1729 and were formerly at the entrance to Abraham Redwood's town house in the lower part of Newport.

BOUNDARY

The boundary is drawn to include all the property owned by the Redwood Library including the summer house which is considered as part of the landmark, beginning at the northwest corner at the intersection of Bellevue Avenue and Redwood Street then continuing east along the south curb of Redwood Street about 280 feet to Lot 106 at 11 Redwood Street, then south along this property line to Old Beach Road, then west along the north curb of Old Beach Road to Bellevue Avenue, then north along the east curb of Bellevue Avenue to the point of beginning, an area of 1.56 acres.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **1750**

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 Redwood Library, Newport Rhode Island, was the first building designed by Peter Harrison, one of America's most prominent and important architects of the eighteenth century. It is probably the most architecturally significant of his buildings, although the least imaginative in design. In 1748, the year of its conception, it was a unique example in America of Palladian Design, then enjoying great popularity in England. It is derived ultimately from one of Lord Burlington's small garden temples at Chiswick which had a classic Doric portico surmounted by a full pediment and flanked by two small wings of half pediment form. In the post-colonial years this form was to become increasingly popular and culminated in the classical temples of the early century in the designs of Thomas Jefferson and the Greek Revival.

The dependence on books is characteristic of the age and it is to Harrison's credit that he could adapt the designs to native scale and materials. After his first attempt at the Redwood Library he became better acquainted with the forms and was able to design more imaginatively, but the building stands as a monument to the introduction of a new taste and to the man who was one of the first to raise architecture to an art in America.

HISTORY

In 1747 Abraham Redwood contributed £500 to a Newport philosophical society for the purchase of books, and other Newport citizens subscribed an additional £5,000 for the construction of a library building. In June 1748, land was presented to Mr. Redwood for the structure. In ~~July~~, Joseph Harrison, Peter's brother was chosen director and it was probably at his suggestion that he was selected to draw the plan. Peter Harrison, up to this time had been a sea captain and merchant like his brother, developing an interest in architecture through his extensive travels abroad. In 1748 he was in London at which time he became familiar with the Kent-Burlington circle and English Palladianism.

Going beyond colonial design, Harrison chose the temple form used by the Earl of Burlington at Chiswick and by William Kent as a garden pavilion at Holkham. Two of Harrison's books, Edward Hoppus' Palladio and Issac Ware's Designs of Inigo Jones and Others, contain a design identical

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bridengough, Carl, Peter Harrison, First American Architect, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1949.
 Downing, Antoinette F., Early Homes of Rhode Island, Richmond, Va., 1937.
 _____ and Scully, Vincent J. Jr., The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, 1640-1915, Cambridge, 1952.
 Morrison, Hugh, Early American Architecture, New York, 1952.

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 | | UTM | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE |
| | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | |
| NW | 0 ' " | 0 ' " | | 0 ' " | 0 ' " | |
| NE | 0 ' " | 0 ' " | | 0 ' " | 0 ' " | |
| SE | 0 ' " | 0 ' " | | 0 ' " | 0 ' " | |
| SW | 0 ' " | 0 ' " | | 0 ' " | 0 ' " | |
| | | | | 19.307190.4595150 | | |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **1.5 acres**

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|--------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **Patricia Heintzeman, architectural historian, Landmark Review Project, original form prepared by Charles Shedd, Jr., 1960.**

ORGANIZATION: **Historic Sites Survey** DATE: **1/21/75**

STREET AND NUMBER: **1100 L. Street, N.W.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE: **D.C.** CODE: **11**

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 _____ (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Title _____

Date _____ (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS) **Landmark** **059 1960**
 Designated: _____ date _____
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS) Boundary Certified:
 Date _____ **Patricia Heintzeman 7-1-75**
 Chief, Hist. & Arch. Surveys

ATTEST: _____ date _____
 Boundary Affirmed:
 Keeper of The _____ **Patricia Heintzeman 7/1/75**
 Director, _____ date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

| | | |
|------------------|--------------|------|
| STATE | Rhode Island | |
| COUNTY | Newport | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | | DATE |
| | | |

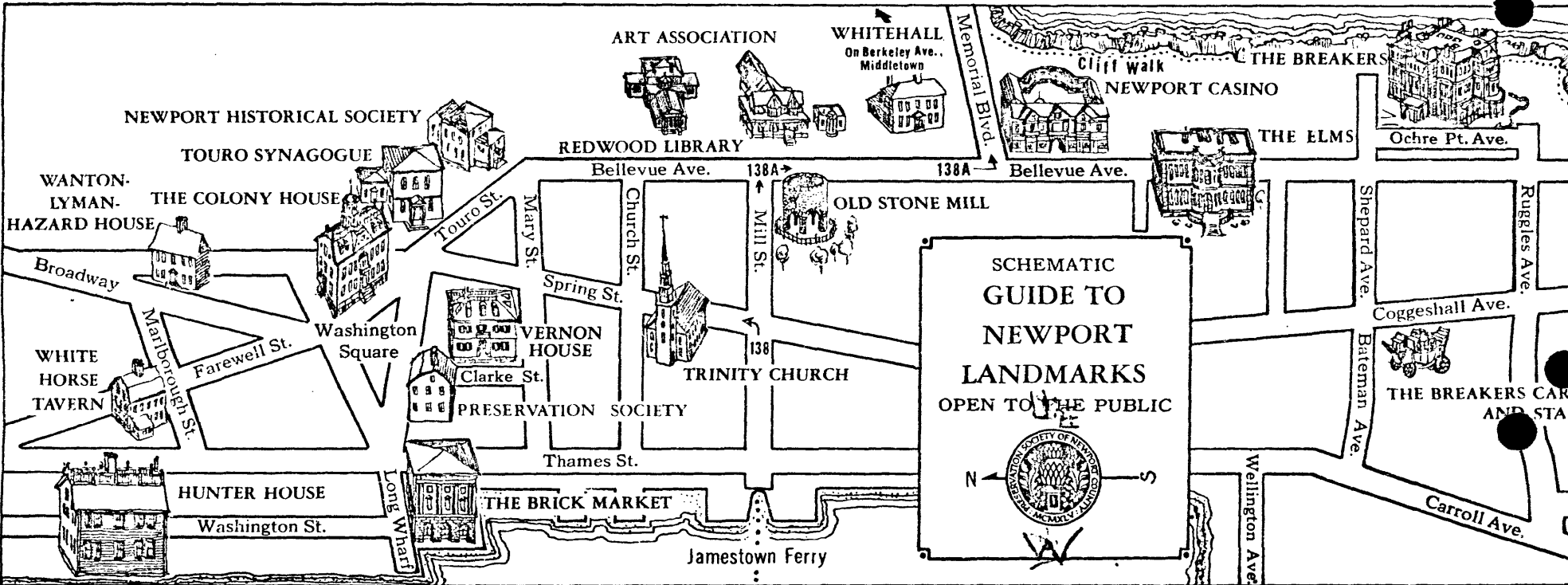
(Number all entries)

8. Significance second page

with the facade of the Redwood Library. Nearly all of the exterior designs can be found in these two books and William Kent's Designs of Inigo Jones. In this latter volume the three range of Venetian windows used by Harrison for the original rear facade are illustrated as used at Chiswick. A similar treatment, with more detail, appeared in Ware and as the Headpiece to the Second Book of Hoppus. The doorway details can be found in Kent's first volume.

The library was completed in 1750. Large additions to the side and rear were made in 1858, when the three windows in the back were salvaged and placed to the side. There were also additions in 1875 and 1913.

During the Revolution, the building became an officer's club, and as a result about one half of the collection was lost. In 1780 it served as the house for the state assembly but in 1801 the Redwood Library Company was reorganized and has continued in operation to the present time.



Redwood Library