

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Bristol	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70.4.38.0009	DATE 4/28/70

1. NAME

COMMON:
Bristol County Court House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
High Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Bristol

STATE Rhode Island, 02809	CODE 44	COUNTY: Bristol	CODE 001
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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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

STREET AND NUMBER:
State House, 90 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence	STATE: Rhode Island, 02903	CODE 44
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Bristol Town Clerk

STREET AND NUMBER:
Court Street

CITY OR TOWN: Bristol	STATE: Rhode Island	CODE 44
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

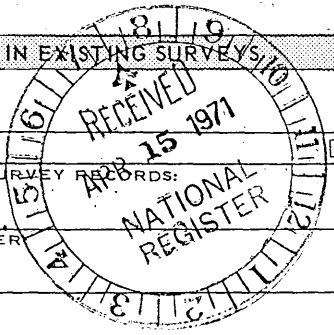
TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: APR 15 1971

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Federal State County Local

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:	STATE:	CODE:
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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 type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

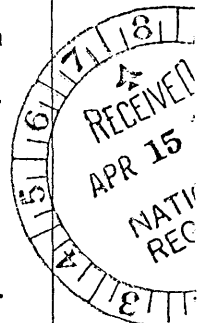
In 1816 a contract was made by the town of Bristol to have constructed a new court house, this to be of stone laid in mortar and faced with brick. It was so built, with dressed stone quoins, lintels and other trim, though now the brick walls are covered with stucco and the stone trim is painted a pink-tan.

In its central portion the building is a gabled one (the ridge running east and west), three bays wide and of three storeys--the third storey of much diminished height; its main entrance is on the west. The building, however, extends to north and south in two two-storey portions (appearing like wings but not actually being such), each of which carries a hipped roof halved and terminated against the sides of the higher gabled centre section. Surmounting this centre section is a square wooden tower of two stages, each railed, supporting an octagonal belfry or cupola with arched, louvred openings and a concave conical, or pagoda-type, roof.

The building may have been designed by Russell Warren, who worked much in Bristol, and it is a modest example of the Federal period. It has not suffered from exterior alteration except for the stucco, which is scarcely disfiguring. The main entrance, apparently originally unsheltered, now has a shallow wooden porch added within recent years which in fact enhances the building; it is (by Wallis Howe) of sympathetic and carefully considered design. This porch occurs beneath the main original decorative feature of the west façade, a large, modestly rusticated arched window opening subdivided by wooden colonettes and interlaced "Gothick" mullions. Louvred window shutters or blinds are hung outside the other windows. Perhaps there were such blinds originally, but the present ones are obviously modern replacements of thin mill-work and, moreover, are hung inside-out. The building's exterior is well maintained and has a crisp, clean appearance.

Internally, the building is intact except for minor changes required for convenience or for official procedure as, for example, in 1836, when the ground floor was used for town offices, and in 1870, when the judges' bench was shifted from one side of the court to the other, causing a fireplace to be closed. The west entrance leads into a vestibule and large hall which open to offices at the rear and sides of the ground floor. Two staircases at the front corners of the hall lead to the courtroom occupying, unobstructed, the entire second floor. The ceiling of this large room is supported only at the sides within the room, but is otherwise held up by a trusswork of heavy beams in the attic. The "third storey" of the centre portion of the court house contains only that trusswork, and no rooms, in spite of its windows. The interior of the building has always been notably lacking in forms of adornment, having only the simplest of mouldings in necessary places.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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) 1816

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

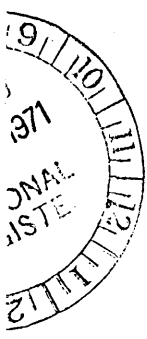
<input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal	<input type="checkbox"/> Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Political	<input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning
<input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> 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

This is one of the five court houses or "state houses" (in which, up to 1855, the General Assembly of Rhode Island met) in prescribed rotation. The Assembly first met in Bristol in 1785, thus asserting that town's importance as a county centre (the area had been annexed from Massachusetts in 1747). Though not really large and not known to have been a background for great legislative or judicial events, personalities or decisions, the court house was evidently from the beginning intended to provide Bristol with a public building of some visual importance and the legislature and judiciary with dignified accommodations.

It remains a part of the state's history and of Bristol's, as well as being a fine example of Federal architecture and an adornment to the town common.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Thompson, Charles O. F.: Sketches of Old Bristol (Providence, Rhode Island, 1942), pp. 152-154.
 Downing, Antoinette F.: Early Homes of Rhode Island (Richmond, Virginia, 1937), p. 408.

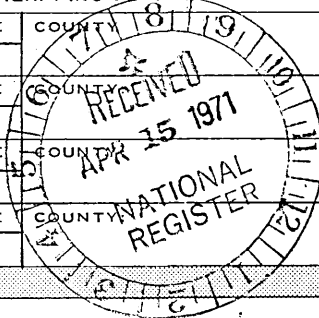
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	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	° ' "	° ' "		41° 39' 46" N	71° 16' 17" W	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
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



19/3/0890/4/14/70
 13-9-75 wna
 OTM DEF
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Richard B. Harrington, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission DATE: January 14, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:
State House, 90 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island, 02903 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 Frederick C. Williams

Title State Liaison Officer

Date April 12, 1971

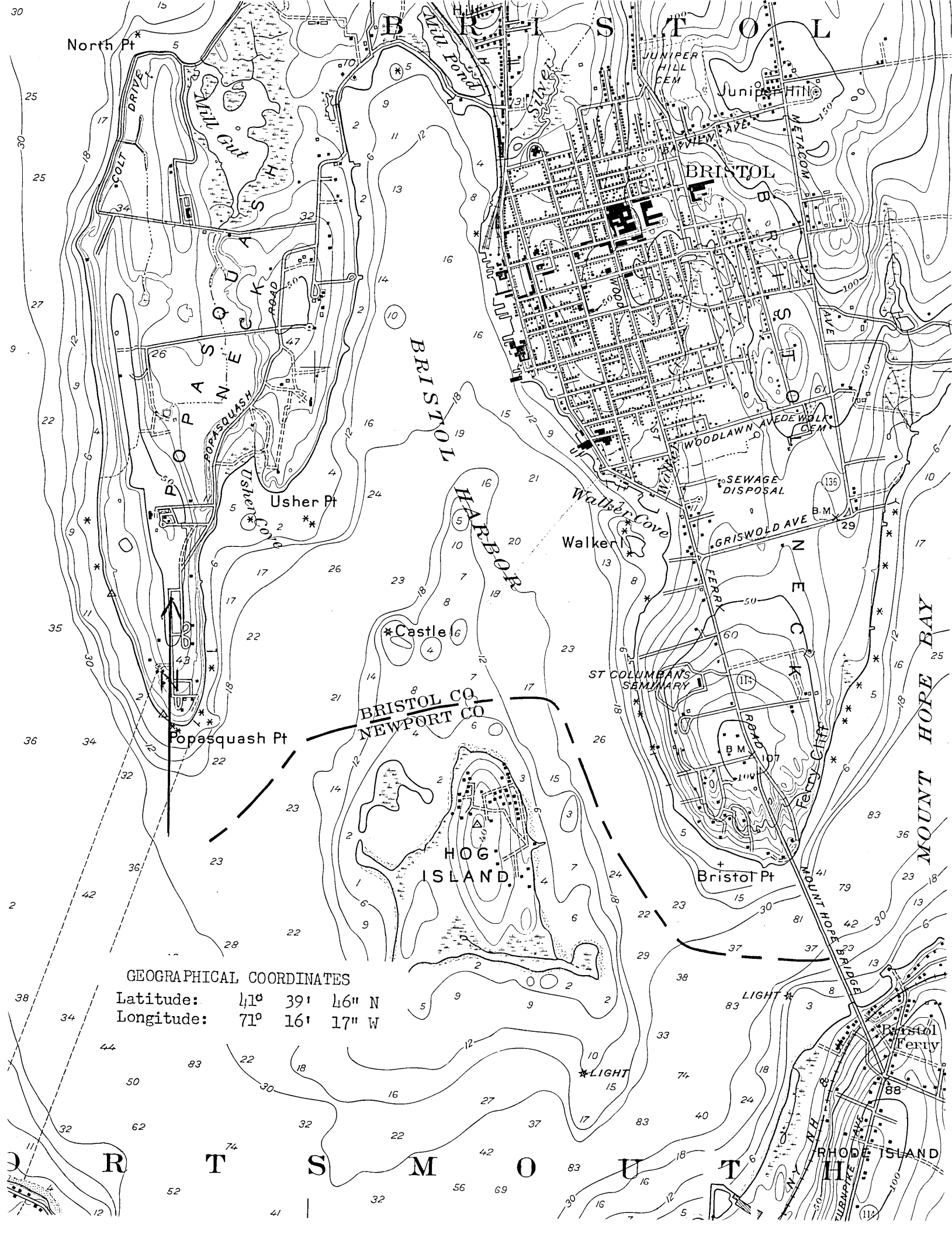
I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Robert A. Connolly
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
 4/28/70

Date _____

ATTEST William M. Smith
 Keeper of The National Register

Date 4/13/70



GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES

Latitude: 41° 39' 46" N
 Longitude: 71° 16' 17" W