

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 70-4-38- <del>000</del> 0003	DATE 4/28/70

1. NAME

COMMON:  
Whitehall

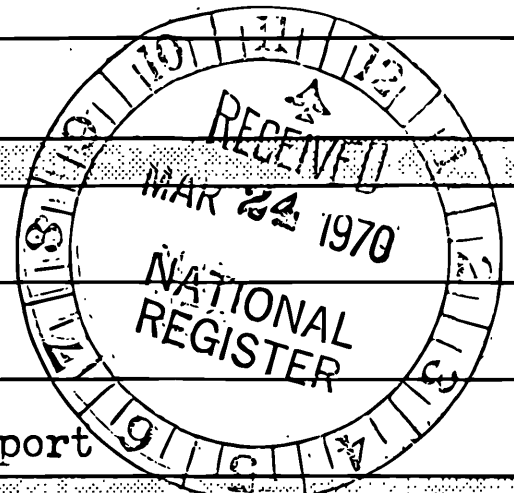
AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Berkeley (Bishop George) House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Berkeley Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:  
Middletown

STATE: Rhode Island      CODE: 38      COUNTY: Newport      CODE: 005



3. CLASSIFICATION

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

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME: Yale University (lessor to Society of Colonial Dames in America in the State of Rhode Island)

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: New Haven      STATE: Connecticut      CODE: 06

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Town Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Middletown      STATE: Rhode Island      CODE: 38

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: LESS THAN TEN See letter 12-19-70

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey: Supplement, 1957.

DATE OF SURVEY: 1957      Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington      STATE: District of Columbia      CODE: 08

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
COUNTY: \_\_\_\_\_  
ENTRY NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
FOR NPS USE ONLY

**7. DESCRIPTION**

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Whitehall is commonly dated 1729; but it may have had its real beginnings before that year in that portion forming the rear of the present house and resembling a shed-like addition with its own central chimney. This portion may, on the other hand, have instead been added later to the larger conjoined structure which certainly was erected in 1729 for Dean (later Bishop) Berkeley.

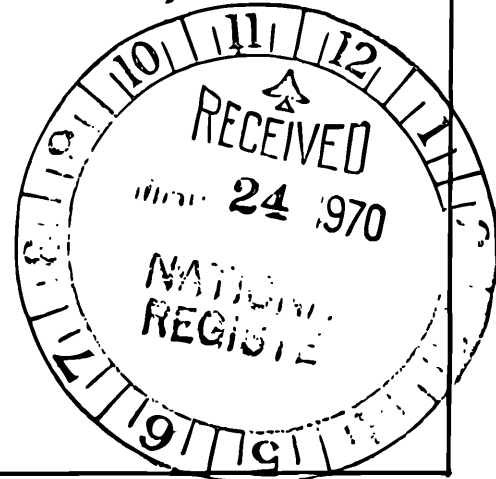
In any case it is the 1729 structure which forms the more important part of the dwelling. This is of timber and clapboard construction, two storeys in height, topped by a hipped and ridged roof. Its interior plan is dictated by its central chimney. This last allows a small entry hall flanked by two major first-floor rooms (Red and Green Parlours) and small storage areas. The kitchen is contained in the rear extension. The stairway--now, at least--is placed in a side entry hall where the hip-roofed main house and shed-roofed rear part join. (It is thought that the quite small front entry could never have conveniently accommodated a stair.)

The only exterior adornments are a modillion cornice (twice replaced or restored) on three sides of the 1729 house and a large pedimented doorway centred between two of its four first-floor windows. This does not centre the entrance in plan, however, and so the door, which is apparently a wide double one, has only one operable leaf, opening into the entry--the inoperable leaf is backed by a parlour wall.

Over a long period of varied tenancies and uses, the house received some minor appendages (now removed) and alterations (now rectified) which did not affect its basic appearance or plan. Since 1899 the house has been under the care of The Society of Colonial Dames in America in the State of Rhode Island and maintenance has been constant. Restoration has been thoughtfully and expertly carried out, particularly in programs undertaken in 1936 and 1966-1968. Most of the interior trim is original (over-mantel panelling, bolection mouldings, fireplace tiles etc.) though a small amount of woodwork and a replacement staircase in the side entry were brought from old houses nearby.

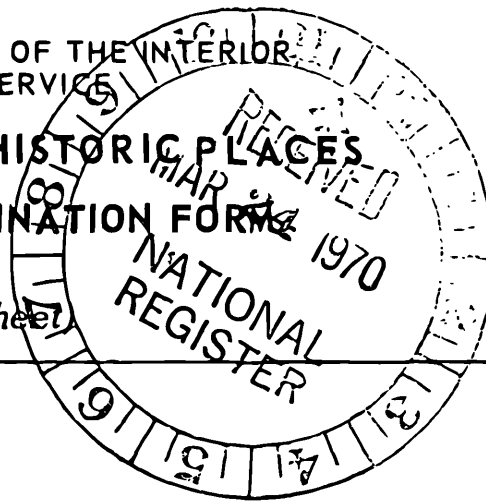
The house is maintained as a museum, suitably furnished with pieces of its period. It has been painted inside and outside in colours of its period. A smaller structure which Berkeley had on his property, specifically to house his library, no longer exists, nor do any other accessory buildings.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)



STATE	
COUNTY	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
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(Number all entries)

Description (continued)

From Architectural Heritage of Newport p. 439-440

George Berkeley Dean of Derry and later Bishop of Cloyne, spent three years in Rhode Island waiting for funds voted by Parliament with which to found St. Paul's College in Bermuda for the education of colonials and the New World Indians. Arrived January 23, 1729. On same ship, John Smibert, painter, and John James, architect.

House - Small house standing on site owned by Joseph Whipple. This house may be the present kitchen ell. Berkeley built the front part and perhaps whole house c 1729. Unpretentious center entry and chimney, hip roofed building with long sloping lean to across back that covers the kitchen ell which has its own chimney.

Berkeley left Newport in 1731 and deeded house and grounds to Yale in 1732. Within 12 years it had become an inn, known as Whitehall, and continued to be known as a Newport landmark. A picture drawn by Lieutenant Harwood USN c 1840 was included in Picturesque Illustrations of Rhode Island and the Town of Newport. By the 1870's the house considered a picturesque ruin, was receiving attention by the many summer residents and their architects who were creating a great summer resort in Newport. In this picturesque state, the building deserves mention because it was one of the buildings that aroused interest in the colonial architecture of Newport, and thus was influential in the general turn to Colonial Revival in the 1880's.

In 1899 the Colonial Dames secured a 999 year lease from Yale and at that time undertook a restoration of the building. A second restoration under the supervision of Norman Morrison Isham was begun in 1936. The original modillion cornice was replaced in 1900 and the arrangement of the wide front door and the location of the original stairway are still not fully understood but the house has been restored with great care and the 1936 work has been precisely documented.

Because of its immediate English origin, an original oddity of plan, and later changes, the building presents certain unsolved problems, but it is one of the very fine restorations of the state. The two-story house with its central chimney, high roof hipped back to a ridge, and long lean-to has been painted the old Spanish brown color common to early eighteenth-century dwellings. The peculiarity of the wide divided front doorway, half of which is false and extends beyond the parlor wall at the left is still unexplained. If there has been any chance, it must have been made early because Harwood's drawing shows that the arrangement was in existence then.

The original modillion cornice was <sup>re</sup>placed in 1900. The new one is slightly smaller in scale, and is unusual in that the windows are set some six inches below it and do not break into it.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) -2-

STATE	
COUNTY	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
70.4.38.0003	

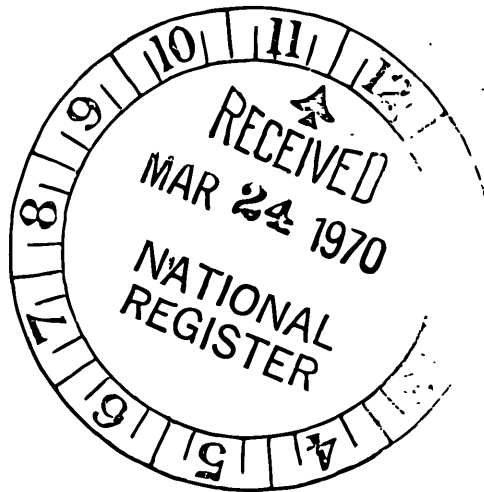
(Number all entries)

Description (continued)

From Architectural Heritage of Newport p. 439-440

The space in the entry hall where the stairway normally should be is not supposed to be large enough to allow stairs, but a back side hall between the east parlor and the so-called Dean's study has evidently served as a stair hall for many years. Ninyon Challoner's house of 1735 had such a side-hall plan. The staircase now installed here is not original, but it came from an old Newport house.

The red parlor at the right and the green room at the left have been restored to their early appearance, with their early bolection paneled chimney breasts. The seventeenth-century tiles surrounding the fireplace in the red room came from Holland. The framed green tree tiles in the green room were part of the original fireplace tiles that the Berkeleys installed. The old paneling in the study was installed in the 1900 reclamation, but the tiles around this fireplace are original. The present kitchen, with its mammoth brick fireplace in which the oven is set in the back wall, may be the house Joseph Whipple sold the Dean in 1729. The slave quarters for the three slaves Berkeley bought in Newport, and a kitchen fireplace, were located in the cellar. There is also evidence that the Dean's library was housed in a little separate building, the one that the Reverend Andrew Burnaby, writing in his diary in 1759, reported was then being converted into a dairy.



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet) -3-

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER WAR 7 1975	DATE

(Number all entries)

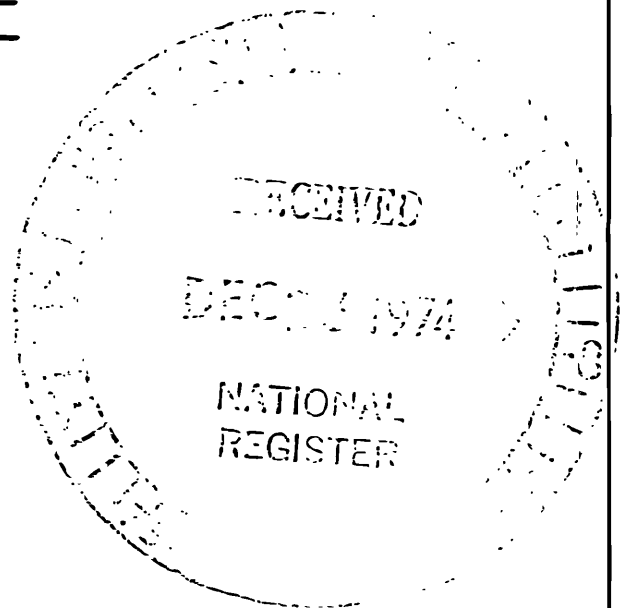
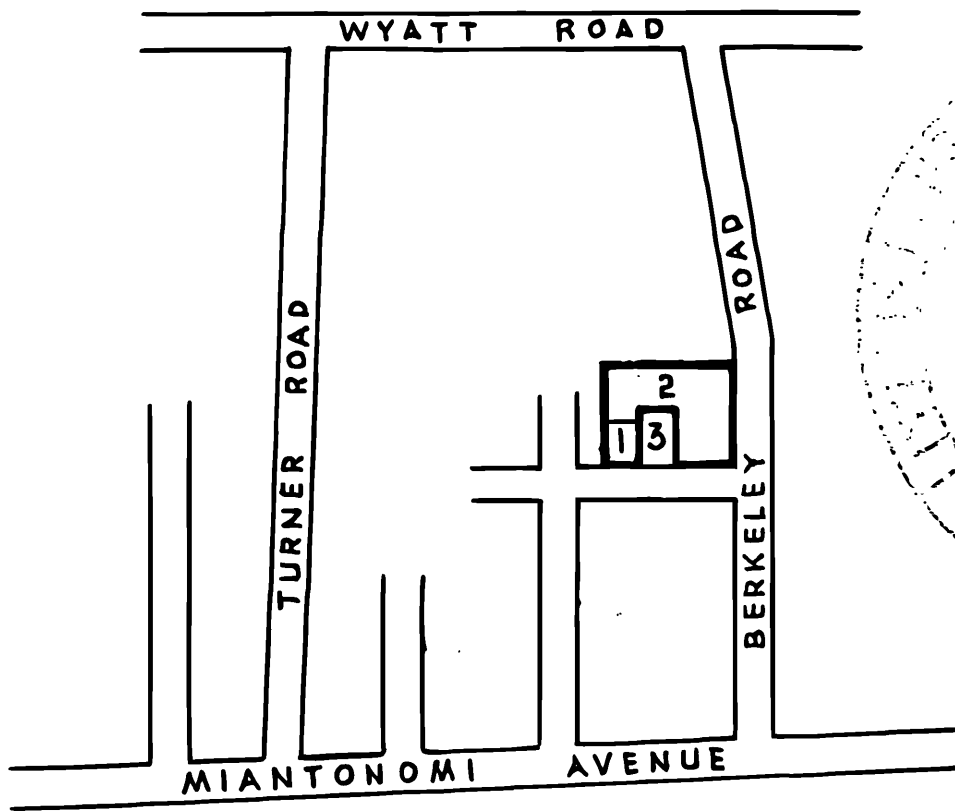
7. Description: Addendum

Whitehall was built by Bishop Berkeley expressly as a country retreat on 96 pastoral acres. Today only a little more than half an acre of the original tract of land has been preserved along with the house by the National Society of Colonial Dames in the State of Rhode Island (both house and land are on lease until the year 2000 from Yale University, Berkeley's legatee in his will). The Colonial Dames have successfully landscaped this property in keeping with the period of the house, and they have recently arranged for visitors' parking on the south side of the entrance drive so that automobiles will not come up to the house itself.

Most of Bishop Berkeley's original and sizeable tract of land has been altered by real estate development, and unfortunately a highly incongruous modern house stands adjacent to the eastern property line of the present Whitehall land. However, to the north and east of the half-acre on which Whitehall is located there remain approximately eight acres of open, unspoilt country land which enhance the Whitehall site and give an indication of the rural area it once dominated. As these acres provide a good period background for Whitehall and provide some protection against encroaching development. the 1969 National Register nomination (which gives no acreage figure) should be amended to specifically include this land.

*W. J. Wadsworth*  
Director, Office of Archaeology and  
Historic Preservation  
Date *3/7/75*

*W. J. Wadsworth*  
Keeper of the National Register  
Date *3/5/75*



- KEY -

- 1 WHITEHALL
- 2 EIGHT ACRES OF UNDEVELOPED LAND
- 3 PRIVATELY OWNED PROPERTY

VICINITY MAP ~ WHITEHALL ~ MIDDLETOWN, R. I.

*WJW*  
*3/5/75*

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

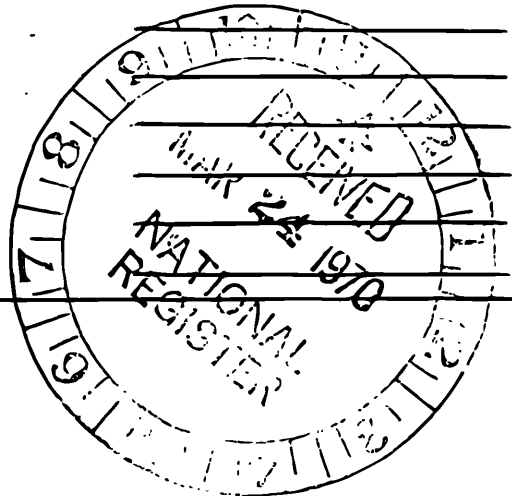
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1729

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	
Art <input type="checkbox"/>	Landscape <input type="checkbox"/>	Social/Humanitarian <input type="checkbox"/>	
Commerce <input type="checkbox"/>	Architecture <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Theater <input type="checkbox"/>	
Communications <input type="checkbox"/>	Literature <input type="checkbox"/>	Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>	
Conservation <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>		
	Music <input type="checkbox"/>		



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

X "GEORGE BERKELEY  
(1685-1753)

"Irish patriot, eminent divine, early American philanthropist, master of English prose, and profound philosopher, at the age of 28, in 1710, George Berkeley completed The Principles of Human Knowledge, 'one of the most astounding contributions ever made by any man to philosophical thought.' He landed at Newport on Rhode Island in 1729, while on his way to found a college in Bermuda. Remaining at Newport until 1732, he wrote there a refutation of Deism entitled Alciphron, Or, The Minute Philosopher, and helped to found a Philosophical Society, which became the basis for the celebrated Redwood Library. During his Rhode Island sojourn, the Dean of Derry lived in a farmhouse in the present Middletown, which he presented to Yale College at the time of his return to England to become Bishop of Cloyne. The divine also made studies of the theory of vision and he distinguished between primary and secondary qualities of matter. 'There is no corporeal or material substance: it remains therefore that the cause of ideas is an incorporeal active substance, or spirit.' Berkeley declared that not only matter, but the Newtonian conceptions of time, space, and motion were inconceivable. His principal American disciple was Samuel Johnson of Stratford, Conn., later first president of King's (Columbia) College in New York.

"One of the most distinguished Europeans who ever dwelt in America, George Berkeley figured prominently in our history. Both for its own merits as a fine example of 18th-century rural New England architecture, and as a residence of a truly great world figure, Whitehall deserves to be preserved.

"Carl Bridenbaugh."  
(signed)

The house also has an importance in having much attracted those architects who visited and sketched around Newport in the late XIX Century, engendering our "Colonial Revival" style.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

copy  
1729

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Benjamin Rand: Berkeley's American Sojourn. (Cambridge, Mass., 1932.)  
 John Wild: George Berkeley; a study of his life and his philosophy. (Cambridge, Mass., 1936.)  
 Antoinette F. Downing: Early Homes of Rhode Island (Richmond, Virginia, 1937), pp. 107, 113; 85, 128, 132, 134, 175, 177.  
 Antoinette F. Downing and Vincent J. Scully, Jr.: The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, 1640-1915 (Cambridge, Mass, 1952), pp. 84, 172-174; pl. 85, 86, 193.

**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 ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		41° 30' 47" N	71° 16' 19" W	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

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:  
 Richard P. Harrington

ORGANIZATION  
 Rhode Island State Historical Preservation Commission

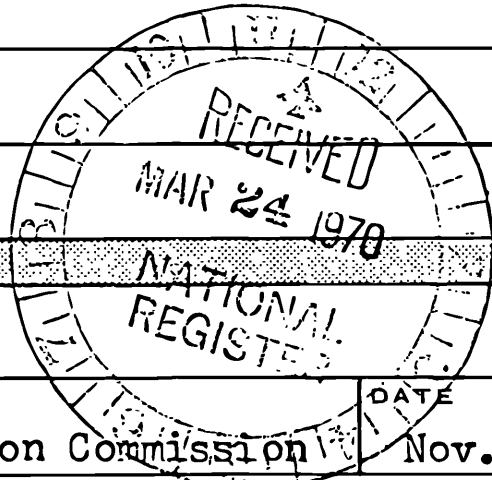
STREET AND NUMBER:  
 24, Meeting Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
 Providence

STATE  
 Rhode Island

DATE  
 Nov. 22, 1969

CODE  
 38



**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 Williamson

Title State Liaison Officer

Date March 18, 1970

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

Ernest Allen Cannally  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date APR 28 1970

ATTEST:

William J. Mustoge  
 Keeper of The National Register

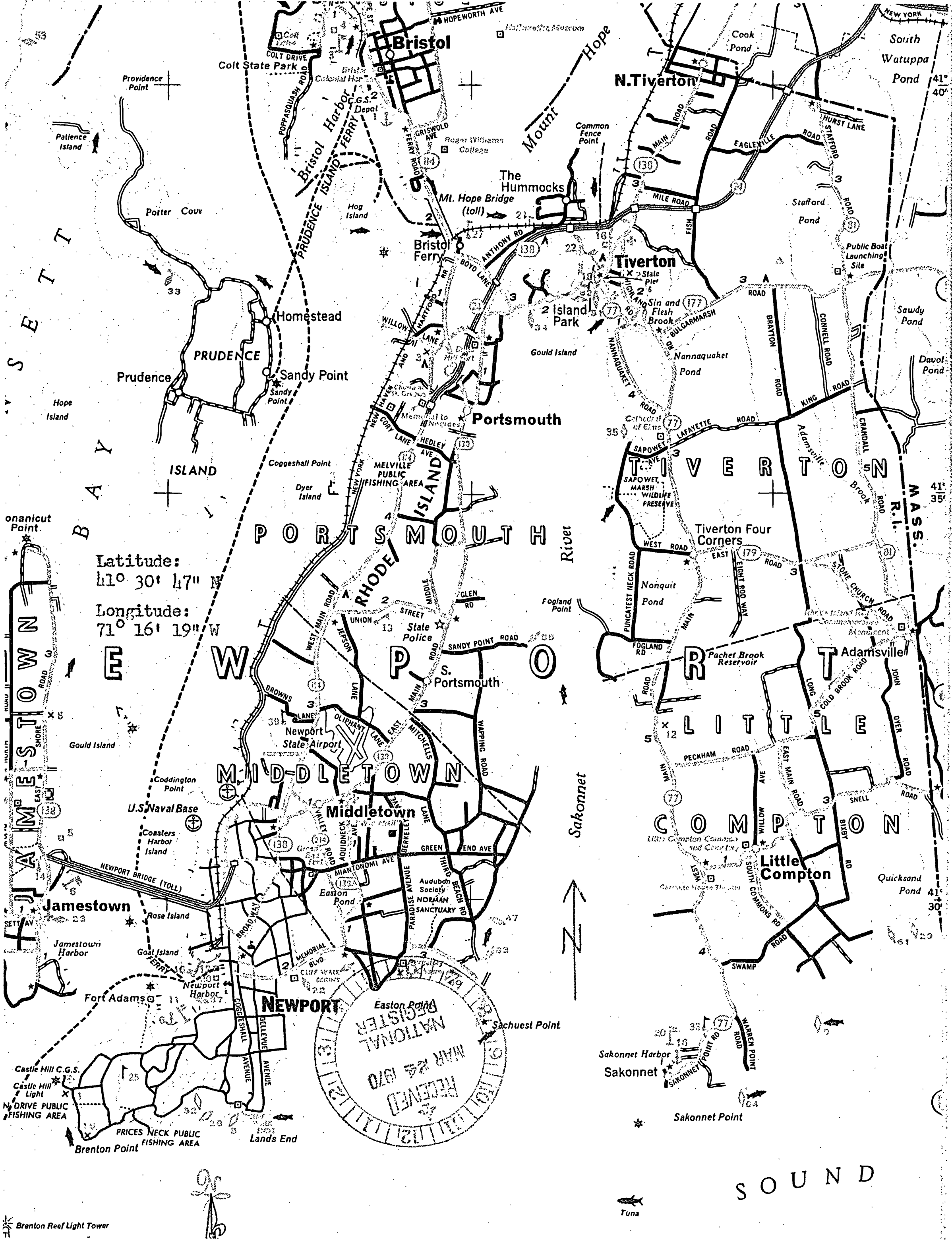
Date APR 6 1970

SEE INSTRUCTIONS









Latitude:  
 $41^{\circ} 30' 47''$  N  
 Longitude:  
 $71^{\circ} 16' 19''$  W

NARRAGANSETT BAY  
 NATIONAL REGISTER  
 MAR 22 1970  
 RECEIVED

Brenton Reef Light Tower



Tuna

SOUND