

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 71,144,0001	DATE 1/25/71

1. NAME

COMMON: Clarke Street Meeting House

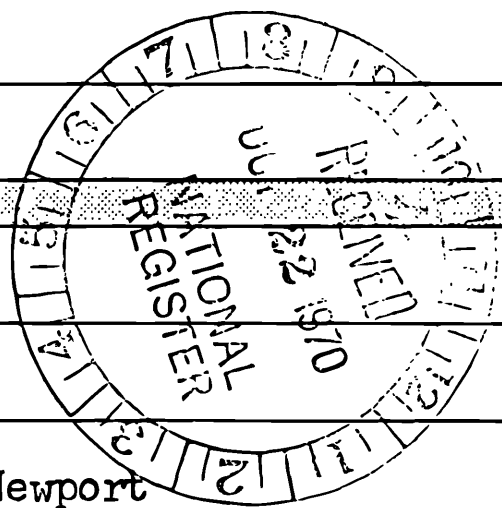
AND/OR HISTORIC: Second Congregational Church

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: Clarke 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
District <input type="checkbox"/>	Public <input type="checkbox"/>	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/>	Occupied <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>
Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	In Process <input type="checkbox"/>	Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Restricted <input type="checkbox"/>
Site <input type="checkbox"/>	Both <input type="checkbox"/>	Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/>	Preservation work in progress <input type="checkbox"/>	Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/>
Object <input type="checkbox"/>				No: <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Educational <input type="checkbox"/>	Military <input type="checkbox"/>	Religious <input type="checkbox"/>	<u>Storage</u>	
Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>	Museum <input type="checkbox"/>	Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS NAME: Corporation of St. Joseph's Church of Newport, Rhode Island

STREET AND NUMBER: 5, Mann Avenue

CITY OR TOWN: Newport STATE: Rhode Island, 02840 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, 02840 CODE: 44

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: Rhode Island Statewide Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1970 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

STREET AND NUMBER: State House, 90, Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island, 02903 CODE: 44

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

71,144,0001 / 1/25/71

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input type="checkbox"/>	Fair <input checked="" 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

In 1735 the Second Congregational Society of Newport required a meeting-house and called upon Cotton Palmer, a builder or housewright of the Providence-Taunton area, to provide them with one. (He had already experience in building another Newport meeting-house a few years earlier.) Specifications given Palmer were for a building to be located on the west side of Clarke Street and "to be 62 feet long 42 broad 26 between joints with a proper and proportionate spire." One need not add that a timber-framed structure clothed and trimmed in wood was had in mind, this to be upon stone foundations.

Such was provided by Palmer: a simple, gabled, clapboarded rectangle with a tower and spire partially indented in the east gable end. The tower is shown in a 1740 view to have risen one square storey above the gable, with a flat-headed sash-window on each side; this was surrounded at its top by a rail or parapet with short pinnacles on each corner-post; it was surmounted by an octagonal stage of one storey with four windows. On top of this last was set the octagonal shingled spire, its roof pent out like a flounce at the bottom, a weather-vane at its top.

for change in correspondence

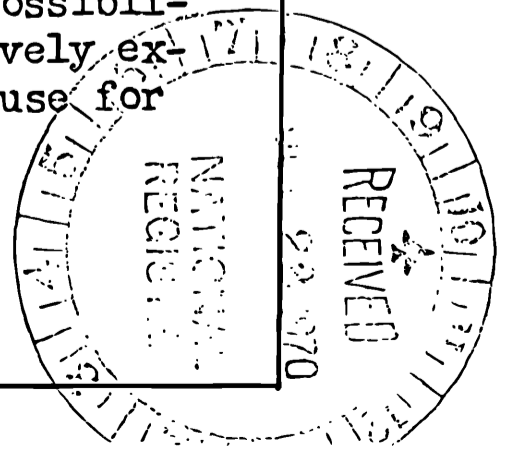
This same 1740 view shows the church to have had seven bays along its sixty-two-foot sides and four in its forty-two-foot ends. Entrance was not through the base of the tower or in the east end at all, but through a doorway in the middle of the north side, opposite the pulpit. Though tower and spire are in what had become their conventional position, pulpit and pews still remained in the old New England "preaching-hall" arrangement (this corroborated by an 1816 pew plan).

The building suffered severely during British and French military use during the Revolutionary War, but by 1785 "the whole inside was entirely and elegantly rebuilt."

Antoinette F. Downing tells us (see Section 9, Bibliographical References) that "when the Central Baptist Society bought the building in 1847, they made extensive changes ... lengthening the house to ninety-three feet and enclosing the tower in the body of the church ... added Greek Revival exterior and interior detail, but Cotton Palmer's spire above the tower remained untouched ... In 1874-1875 wings were added and Victorian detail encrusted on the facade and spire, although the basic lines of the spire were kept until it was taken down in 1946 ..."

The church building has for some time been owned by a local Roman Catholic parish and lately used for storage purposes. Its present condition cannot be praised, but the building is well within the possibility and desirability of rescue, restoration (not to a prohibitively expensive Williamsburg retrospective perfection, however) and re-use for new purposes.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



8. SIGNIFICANCE

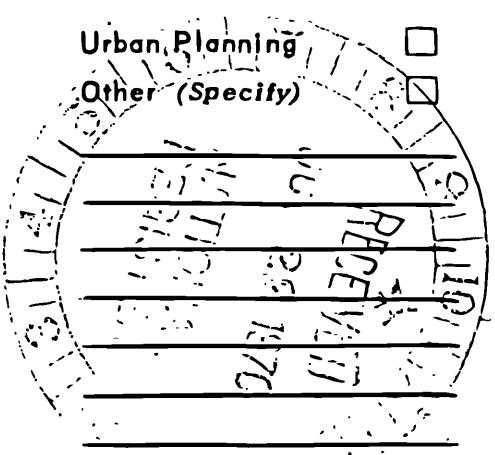
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/>	Education <input type="checkbox"/>	Political <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Landscape <input type="checkbox"/>	Social/Humanitarian <input type="checkbox"/>	
Commerce <input type="checkbox"/>	Architecture <input 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.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

This building has played a part in Newport and Rhode Island history not only as a prominent landmark in early Newport, but also by way of outstanding personalities and new thoughts associated with its pastors and congregation.

Ezra Stiles was one of its earliest pastors (1755-1776) and one of Newport's most active intellects until his departure--because of the local disruption by war--for Connecticut, where he became president of Yale College but still thought of his Newport flock and valued his Newport connections. James Franklin (brother of Benjamin) was a Newporter and a friend of Stiles, who obtained from the former some newly-invented lightning-rods which are still in place on the church.

William Ellery, a Signer of the Declaration of Independence, was a member of the Second Congregational Society, as was William Vernon, a Newport nabob prominent in naval affairs of the Revolutionary War. Henry Marchant likewise belonged; he assisted in writing the Constitution of the United States and was insistent upon injecting therein the provisions separating church and state. In the XIX Century the church was a vocal centre for anti-slavery thought. The names of many long- (and still-) prominent Newport families can be found associated with this church.

The building played its part in the military activities of the Revolutionary War, though passively. To-day, although altered and long without a congregation, it plays a most active and visible part in maintaining the integrity of the Clarke Street area, as do the old and adjacent armory of the Newport Artillery Company, the handsome Vernon house (a National Historic Place) across the street and a number of other fine old dwellings. There are plans for a "Clarke Street Restoration," where not already accomplished (see Downing and Scully, pp. 191-197). The Clarke Street Meeting House is naturally included for both historical and visual reasons, in spite of its alterations--some of these could be cosmetically removed and its landmark spire perhaps restored. One cannot think of a substitute for this structure and certainly cannot envision a gaping, empty tooth-hole where it now stands.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

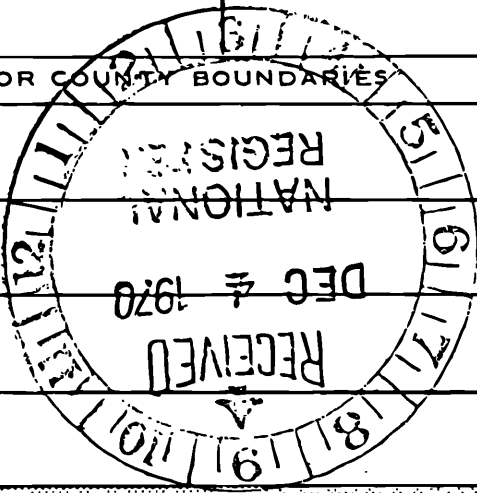
Downing, Antoinette F., and Scully, Vincent J., Jr.: The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, 1640-1915 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1952), pp. 29, 40, 48, 53, 54, 57, 193, 195.

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 ONE ACRE		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		41 ° 29 ' 20 " N	71 ° 18 ' 49 " 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



19/505200/4599-480
 07M Ref
 12-10-1970

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Richard B. Harrington, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission DATE: Sept. 17, 1970

STREET AND NUMBER:
State House, 90, Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island, 02903 CODE: RI

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: Richard B. Harrington

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: November 30, 1970

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

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

JAN 25 1971

Date: _____

ATTEST:

William J. Murtagh
Keeper of The National Register

Date: DEC 22 1970

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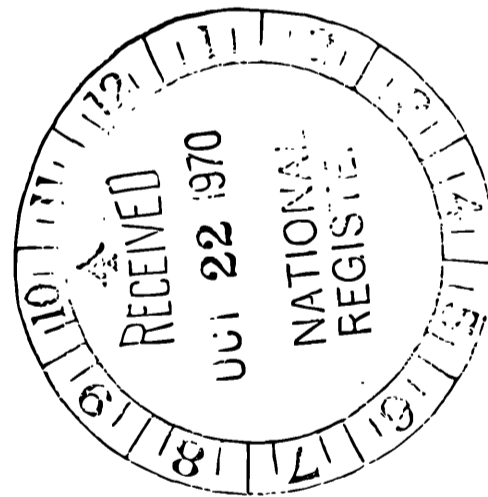
(Continuation Sheet)

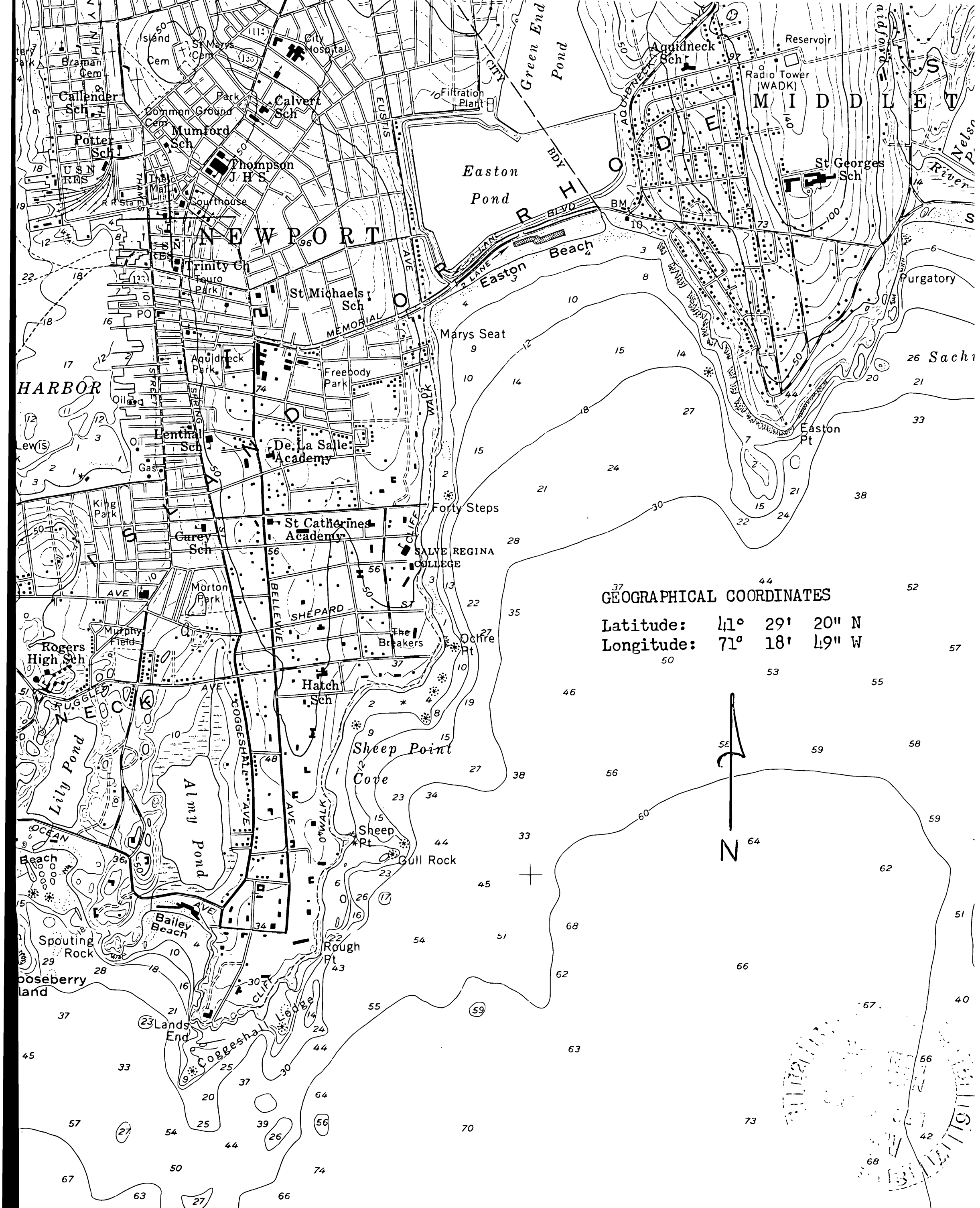
STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Newport	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE
91.1.44.0001	1/25/71

(Number all entries)

6. Representation in Existing Surveys.

Historic American Buildings Survey
1970 Federal
Library of Congress
1st Street and Independence Avenue, S. E.
Washington, District of Columbia 11





GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES

Latitude: $41^{\circ} 29' 20''$ N
 Longitude: $71^{\circ} 18' 49''$ W