

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Kent	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 70.438.0008	DATE 4/28/70

1. NAME

COMMON:
Kent County Court House

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
127 Main Street

CITY OR TOWN:
East Greenwich

STATE Rhode Island, 02818	CODE 44	COUNTY: Kent	CODE 003
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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 type="checkbox"/> Object	<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

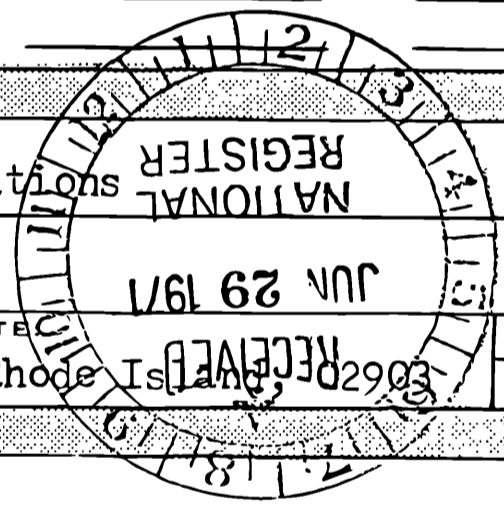
OWNER'S NAME:
State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

STREET AND NUMBER:
State House, 90 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Providence

STATE:
Rhode Island

CODE:
44



5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
East Greenwich Town Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:
111 Peirce Street

CITY OR TOWN:
East Greenwich

STATE:
Rhode Island, 02818

CODE:
44

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Statewide Survey of Historic Buildings

DATE OF SURVEY: 1970-1971
 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

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ENTRY NUMBER
70.438.0008

DATE
4/28/70

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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 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

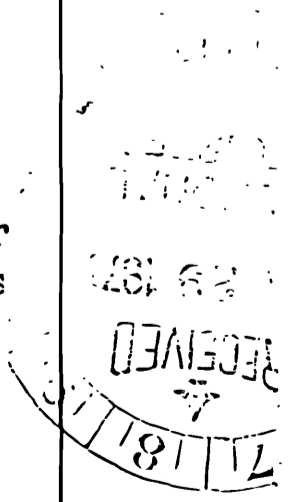
Construction of the Kent County Court House was ordered in 1803, upon decision of a Survey Committee composed of Benjamin Howland, Oliver Wickes and Pardon Tillinghast. Oliver Wickes was the builder under the supervision of a Building Committee made up of Benjamin Howland, George Arnold and Henry Remington, and the building was completed in 1805-1806. It is a timber-framed, clapboarded structure of two principal storeys above a stone basement which is of sufficient height and usefulness to constitute a ground storey. It is covered by a decked hipped roof, with dormers, providing for attic or storage space but not for important rooms. The front elevation is seven bays wide, and a gable or pediment projects from the main roof over the three central bays, the middle one of which contains the principal entrance at first-storey level. There are corner quoins, and quoins mark off the three central bays as a flat "pavilion" (it has no forward projection. A flat board string or belt encircles the building between first and second floors. Rising from the roof's balustraded deck is an oblong clock-tower of one storey, which is in turn surmounted by a cupola which has a concave pyramidal roof supporting a tall weathervane. Both portions of this superstructure have quoins, and the clock opening has a rusticated surround.

The building's exterior size (except for a one-storey addition at the rear) and architectural forms remain unchanged and are much akin to those of Munday's Newport Colony House of 1739 and the Providence Colony House of 1763--the East Greenwich building intended to fulfil functions similar to theirs. (It may also be compared to the New London County Court House in New London, Connecticut.) Some features, such as the projecting enframements for the 12-over-12-sash windows with their key-stoned lintels; the pediment occurring directly above the central pavilion but architecturally and ornamentally unconnected to it; the somewhat stocky clock tower, are more reminiscent, indeed, of the pre-Revolutionary period than of the later era in which the court house was actually built. The over-all scale belongs to the federal period, however, as do the classically detailed but over-wide Tuscan entrance porch, the modillioned and fretted cornices, the delicate geometric design of the roof-deck railing and the mildly sophisticated-appearing classic-cum-pagoda form of the cupola and vane above the clock-tower.

Principal interior accommodations on first and second floors remain as originally arranged. Each floor has a long hall running from front to back (east to west) and containing at the south side the stairs. On the first floor, to the north of this hall, is the superior court room, of two-storey height, with a gallery on its south side. Two-thirds of the space south of the hall are occupied by the district court room, the remaining space being a sizeable office. A one-storey addition at the rear of the building is used for a variety of office and other purposes, as is the basement, and the southern portion of the second floor is given over to three offices.

(See Continuation Sheet.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

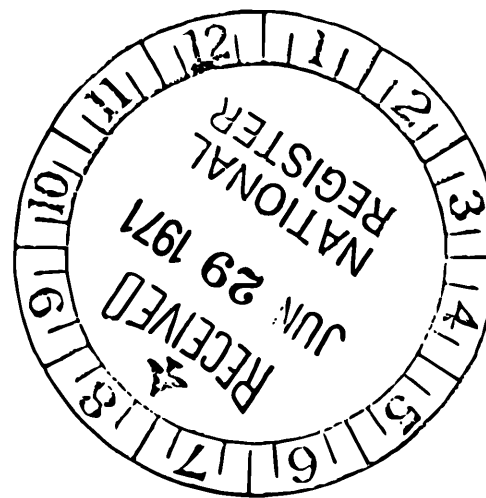
(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Kent	
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(Number all entries)

7. Description.

Ornamental detail within the building has from time to time had alteration and replacement or elaboration here and there (as in extensive remodelling in 1909, believed to have been done by Stone, Carpenter & Willson of Providence, and perhaps Norman M. Isham--all good exponents of the Colonial Revival style). Thus, a series of periods of décor is represented in both the original and later mouldings, panelling etc. of the rooms, hallways and stairways, ranging from the "bamboo" columns inside the main door, the stairway's panelled wainscot and scrolled stair-ends, through Greek Revival window trim and a Colonial Revival scrolled broken pediment with an urn in the main court room.



8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian | 16th Century | 18th Century | 20th Century
 15th Century | 17th Century | 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) C. 1803-1806

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 | | | _____ |

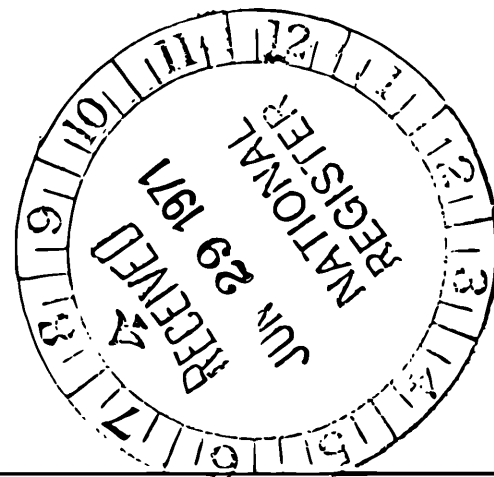
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

A large building, relatively, in a medium-sized old community; a prominent feature of East Greenwich's Main Street; a public building in continued, busy use for its original purposes--the Kent County Court House is a well-known and conspicuous physical landmark, as it has been for one hundred and sixty-five years. Besides that, it is in New England an important surviving example of a governmental or civic structure erected in provincial federal-period style--and not altered, as so many others, in proportion or appearance during the Victorian era.

In addition to its intrinsic architectural and visual values, this court house has importance, too, as a part of the history of the state of Rhode Island--in particular its county and governmental history. From 1750 onwards there has been a court house and county centre on this site, the present building being the second one. For a number of years the general assembly, or legislature, of this state met in prescribed rotation at five principal county seats, of which East Greenwich was one. Each place was, during the sessions held there, the state's capital, and its court house the capitol. The convention called to frame a new Rhode Island constitution met in the Kent County Court House in 1842, and until the practice of rotating capitals was gradually ended in 1854 and the decades following, this building performed its good share as background for important personages, decisions and debates.

To-day, some of the personages and debates which it houses may be less distinguished, but it is a building in constant, vital use, as the state first intended it to be and as its Survey and Building Committees planned it to be.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

McPartland, Martha R.: The History of East Greenwich, Rhode Island, 1677-1960 ... (East Greenwich, Rhode Island, 1960), pp. 166-168.
 Downing, Antoinette F.: Early Homes of Rhode Island (Richmond, Virginia, 1937), p. 318.
 U. S. Works Progress Administration. Federal Writers' Project: Rhode Island. A Guide (Boston, 1937), p. 328.

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	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		41° 32' 39" N	71° 27' 03" W	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: One acre or less

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: April 7, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:
State House, 90 Smith Street

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

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 Therese C. Williamson

Title State Liaison Officer

Date April 23, 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

Ernest A. Connally
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
 4/28/70

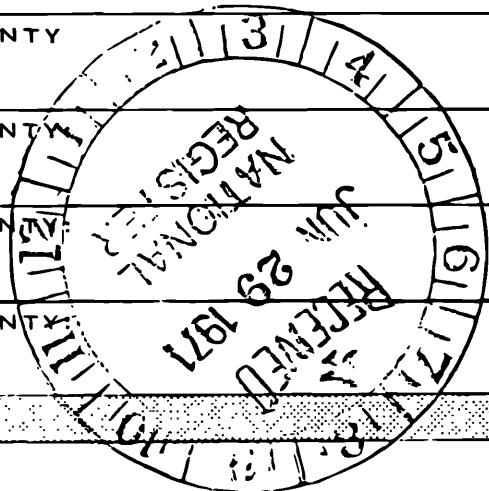
Date _____

ATTEST:

William J. Stewart
 Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

1978 09 23 09/16/14/200
 SEE INSTRUCTIONS



GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES
Latitude: 41° 32' 39" N
Longitude: 71° 27' 03" W

