

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 91.11.44-0039	DATE 11/19/71

1. NAME

COMMON:  
United Congregational Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Spring and Pelham Streets

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
<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/> Comments

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
United Congregational Church

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Spring and Pelham Streets

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

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Historic American Buildings Survey

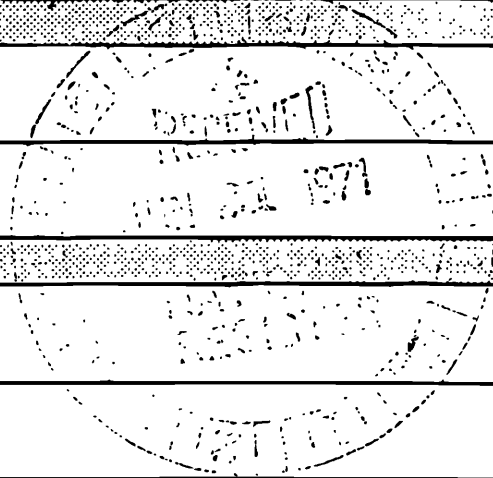
DATE OF SURVEY: 1970       Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Library of Congress

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Independence Avenue and 1st Street, S. E.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington      STATE: District of Columbia      CODE: 11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



STATE:  
COUNTY:  
FOR NPS USE ONLY  
ENTRY NUMBER: 91.11.44.0039  
DATE: 11/19/71

**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 church is a large, rectangular masonry structure, its brown Connecticut sandstone walls laid in random ashlar pattern, with regular quoining at the corners. It is, above a basement, of one high, open story internally, containing there a gallery; exterior walls are divided by a belt course at the gallery level, with a tier of large, single, round-arched windows above and smaller, paired windows below. The gable roof is carried by large timber trusses supported by the outer masonry walls and the nave arcades. The main entrance, in the west gable end framed by corner towers, has triple arched doorways under triple arched windows. The window label mouldings, the eaves and eave brackets--and particularly the arched doorways--all show (Lombardic) Romanesque Revival detail.

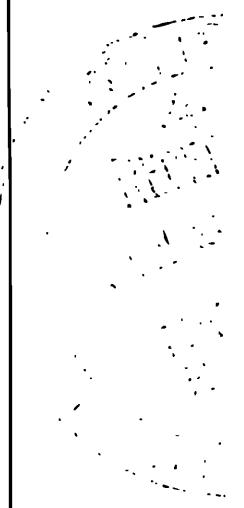
The corner towers are square in plan and of unequal height. The south one terminates just above the eaves line, the north one just above the ridge line, of the main roof. Originally the north tower carried a concave, steep pyramidal roof and an open cupola with a weather-vane: these were lost in a hurricane but are seen in early views.

The main entrance leads to a shallow narthex; stairs to the galleries are in the corner towers left and right. Beyond the narthex is the main auditorium or sanctuary, with a high nave, single aisles to either side with galleries above, and a very shallow chancel against the east wall framed by a large arch. The sanctuary seats over 1,000. Interior walls are finished with wood wainscoting above which is plaster scored in rusticated patterns. Flat plaster ceilings are carried on deeply projecting beams with large, curved knee braces. Round-arched doorways have mediaeval-type mouldings.

Interior decoration by John LaFarge in 1880 included new colored windows, painting of the altar wall, and painting the ceilings. Blues, greens, reds, and gold predominate, and rich, deep, tapestried patterns run throughout. The east wall is done in oil paint directly on the slightly textured plaster wall. Some of the stained glass windows are signed and dated.

A parish house was added in 1908. It adjoins the original building on the east, and contains offices and meeting-rooms in two floors and a partial basement.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

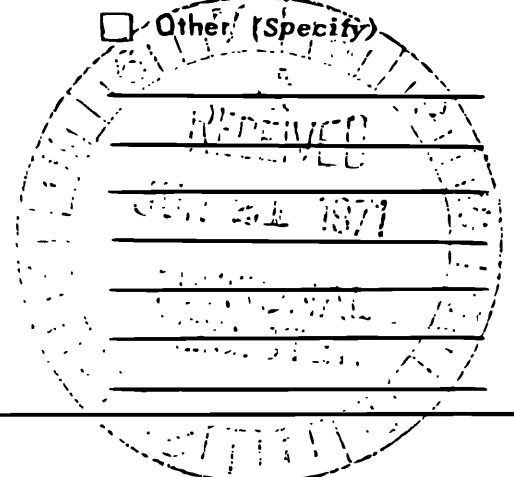
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<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) 1855-1857; interior decoration 1880

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 checked="" 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 checked="" 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			



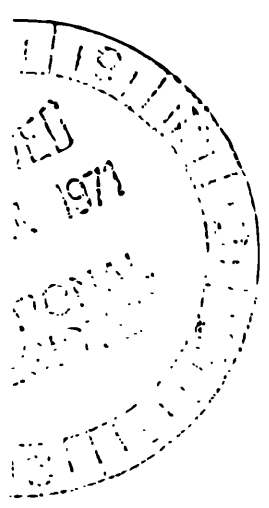
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This building serves the United Congregational Church which was formed in 1833 by the union of the First and Second Congregational parishes in Newport. Their history goes back to the late 17th century, and Ezra Stiles is included in the list of distinguished ministers of the churches. The present building was built during the pastorate (1841-1873) of Dr. Thatcher Thayer, one of the more important clergymen in Newport's history.

The cornerstone of the present building was laid December 5, 1855, and the building was dedicated January 15, 1857. The building was designed by the architect Joseph C. Wells. Builders and contractors included, for carpentry, John Sniffen; for masonry, Samuel McCorkle and Sons; for stone-cutting, William Crommelin. In 1880 the interior of the church was decorated by John LaFarge, and it contains important examples of his mural-painting and stained glass work.

The United Congregational Church is an interesting and well-preserved example of the Romanesque Revival, brownstone churches of the mid-19th century, and as such has a unique spot in the history of Newport's church architecture. It is particularly well sited, and it forms an important architectural accent in a predominately residential or residentially-scaled urban setting.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

Newport Mercury, December 8, 1855.

Congregationalism, including a short history of the United Congregational Church of Newport, Rhode Island (Newport, Rhode Island, c. 1965-1970).

Documents, a coloured lithograph and early photographs owned by the United Congregational Church, Newport, Rhode Island.

**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 ° 29 ' 10 " N	71 ° 18 ' 48 " W	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **LESS THAN 10**

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
Osmund R. Overby, Project Supervisor

ORGANIZATION: Historic American Buildings Survey Newport Project      DATE: August, 1970

STREET AND NUMBER:  
90 Bridge Street

CITY OR TOWN: Newport      STATE: Rhode Island, 02840      CODE: 144

**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 Frederick Williamson

Title State Liaison Officer

Date June 8, 1971

**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

NOV 19 1971

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: William J. Minter  
Keeper of The National Register

Date NOV 15 1971

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

19/306 250 455 957 070

OTM REF

10-10-1971

