

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Barrington Civic Center Historic District

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER County Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Barrington

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF 1 - Fernand St. Germain

STATE Rhode Island

CODE 001

COUNTY Bristol

CODE 44

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: cemetery

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Town of Barrington

STREET & NUMBER County Road

CITY, TOWN Barrington

STATE Rhode Island

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Town Hall, Town of Barrington

STREET & NUMBER County Road

CITY, TOWN Barrington

STATE Rhode Island

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE None

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED    DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Barrington Civic Center Historic District incorporates, from north to south, an eighteenth-century cemetery, a late nineteenth-century town hall and library, an early twentieth-century school and a small pond & park, all located along the crest of Prince's Hill in Barrington, Rhode Island. The district is bounded on the west by County Road and a modern commercial district and on the east by a steep cliff down to the Barrington River. This narrow strip of land, characterized by natural landscape design, has become the major civic center for this suburban community.

Located at the north end of the district, the cemetery is delineated by a low stone wall along County Road with three dissimilar gates. Narrowest at the northern end, the triangular plot extends to the town hall property on the south. The earliest stones date from 1728 and are located at the northern end of the graveyard. Among the more interesting monuments are the Victorian marker of the Ward family with a large, rugged cross and an ethereal angel; a stone commemorating "the slaves and their descendants who faithfully served Barrington families" (1903); and a Classical Revival crypt erected in 1909 by Edith Remington Phillips in memory of her father, Leander Remington Peck.

The Barrington Town Hall, directly south of the cemetery, was designed and constructed in 1887-88 by Stone, Carpenter & Willson, architects of Providence. It is sited along a north-south axis on the ridge of Prince's Hill with the ground falling away in all directions. Described as "medieval" in style by its designers, the building is a fine example of the picturesque eclecticism popular during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The town hall is a one-and-a-half story building constructed with three flank gable units of varying height and depth.\* Two circular towers further accentuate the divisions of the structure into a large central section and smaller northern and southern units. The basement, first story, and the second story of the towers are constructed of boulders. Many of these stones were collected from the fields of early farms and estates, and some were inscribed as memorials with owners' names; one boulder came from Plymouth Rock. The second story below the eaves is half-timbered; the roof and attic ends of the gables are shingled. The planned irregularity of the building is increased by two monumental dormer-gables, a chimney, and a projecting entrance porch all in the central section and two dormers in the southern gable. The dormers towers and steep pitch of the roof give the structure an extremely vertical thrust which is climaxed by an elaborate, copper, three-masted ship, weather vane on the southern tower.

\* In the Town Hall institutional functions are given something of a domestic architectural character, for the building suggests an expansive house in a half-timbered manorial style.

See continuation sheet 1

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CONTINUATION SHEET

1

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 2

The multiple uses for which the building was designed are evident in the plan and on the exterior. The center section is the largest and represents the major function for the building -- government. The first floor rooms in this area were designed for municipal offices, a use which is continued today. The stairwell, to the right of the entrance porch, rises in the southern tower. The important position of the town meeting is represented by the large hall on the second floor center and is expressed on the exterior by the large gable-dormer bays on the front and rear of the building. Secondary entrance on the western facade, below the northern gable-dormer, gives admittance to the northern section of the building, originally used by the library. Entering this door, one passed the librarian's office and into a delivery room; the stacks extended in the wing to the north and a reading room was located to the east. The high school was given the southern section of the building with separate entrances on the south for boys and girls. A second floor room above the high school area was reserved for the collections and meetings of the Antiquarian Society.

After the high school was removed to the adjacent Leander R. Peck School in 1917, the library was transferred to the southern section of town hall and given responsibility for the Antiquarian Society collections on the second floor. Two additions -- in 1938 by Howe & Church and in 1963 by Michael Traficante -- have been made to the town hall for expanding the library. They have consisted of two parallel gable units to the east of the library's southern section which repeat the original material and massing of Town Hall.

A new high school directly south of Town Hall, was donated to the Town of Barrington in 1917 by Sarah Gould Peck in memory of her husband, Leander Remington Peck. To oversee this project, a committee was established consisting of Isaac Foster; Charles A. Hoar, Chairman of the School Committee; and Frederick S. Peck, son of the donor. Construction was begun in the spring of 1916, and the building was opened on September 14, 1917. Martin & Hall, architects of Providence, designed an Elizabethan Revival building which was erected by Wilmarth and Mackillop of Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

Constructed of red Barrington brick with Indiana limestone trim, the building is a two-story gable structure over a full basement.

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A monumental double stairway leads to a second story terrace which gives access to the building. The main entrance is through double doors in a carved stone, segmental pointed arch. Projecting end gable pavilions are decorated with wooden bargeboards. T-shaped in plan, the building has a central entrance at the top of the "T" flanked by offices for the principal and superintendent and other public areas. A central hallway, fourteen feet in width, provides entrance to large, well-lighted classrooms on the main floor. The second floor is comprised of a large assembly room and two large recitation rooms. The basement includes a gymnasium, locker room and space for the manual training program. Additions to the building on the east were constructed in 1925 and 1935, repeating the materials and detailing of the original building and containing today a cafeteria and stage. The Peck School is now used for elementary grades 5 and 6.

South of the Peck School is a small park which consists of a duck pond, called Wood's Pond, with meandering paths along its bank. Here, and throughout the district, a mix of herbaceous and deciduous trees emphasizes the irregular, picturesque qualities of the Prince's Hill site.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD.	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The cemetery, town hall and library, and Peck School represent an historical concentration of public and governmental functions in the Prince's Hill area of Barrington. The hill itself, a prominent land mass, was named for Governor Prince or Prence of Plymouth Plantation. It was crossed by the Wampanoag Trail, an Indian highway which became the main road from Providence to Newport. The hill's location in roughly the geographical center of the community made it the logical location for public lands. The cemetery was laid out during the initial period of community development after Barrington's separation from Swansea, Massachusetts, in 1717. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, Barrington remained a farming community without any definite civic center. The tripling of population between 1840 and 1900, stimulated by the introduction of rail transportation in the 1850s, caused the community's change from a rural to a suburban environment in easy commuting distance to Providence. The location of one of the town's train stations just south of the historic district certainly influenced the placement of civic buildings on Prince's Hill. As a unit, the cemetery, town hall and school, and Wood's Pond, epitomize the late nineteenth-century interest in a planned natural environment.

Although there were many family plots, a public burial ground to serve the residents on the west side of the Barrington River became necessary after the erection of a meetinghouse near Jenny's Lane in 1710 and the subsequent separation of Barrington from Swansea. At a town meeting on January 18, 1728-29, a committee of Timothy Wadsworth, Lieutenant Peck, Zachariah Bicknell, and James Smith was empowered to purchase land on Prince's Hill from Ebenezer Allen to lay out a burying ground for the recently erected Congregational Church, built after 1710 near Jenny's Lane. On December 31, 1729 Mr. Allen was paid five pounds for half an acre which extended from the Wampanoag Trail, now County Highway, eastward to the Barrington River.

Between 1806 and 1898, four additions were made to the cemetery bringing the present size to more than four acres. The cemetery was fenced in 1849 and presently exemplifies the "rural cemetery" tradition of the nineteenth century with meandering drives and natural landscape planting.

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Originally part of Massachusetts, Barrington was incorporated as a Rhode Island town in 1770 but had no municipal offices until the end of the nineteenth century. During the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries, the Congregational meetinghouse functioned as both the religious and governmental community center. After Nayatt Hall, a drill hall, was constructed in 1855, that building was used for meetings of the Town Council, but the clerk, treasurer and other officials were forced to conduct business at their residences. Proposals to construct a Town Hall were defeated in 1863, 1880 and 1882, but finally the purchase of a tract of land on Prince's Hill was approved in 1887. \$15,000 was voted for the construction of a town building, and a committee, consisting of Lewis B. Smith, Charles H. Merriman, and George B. Allen, was named to oversee the work. The cornerstone was laid on September 24, 1887, and the building was completed the following autumn. Designed by the Providence architectural firm of Stone, Carpenter and Willson, the building was intended to be medieval in style and to fit easily into a natural landscape setting.

The Barrington Town Hall was planned to serve the public needs in a variety of ways. Its initial impetus was the need for offices for the town clerk and council, a function that it continues to serve today. Auxiliary functions for the building included its use as a high school, public library and space for the Antiquarian Society. The Library continues to occupy space in the building. The Antiquarian Society has been disbanded. The high school was housed here until 1917 when the adjacent Leander R. Peck School was opened.

The Barrington Library Society was chartered by the Rhode Island Legislature in February, 1806, but the original collection of books eventually fell into disuse and was lost or dispersed. The present library, formed through the efforts of David A. Waldron, was chartered on January 1, 1880, and liberal donations of books were secured. On March 2nd of the same year, the trustees of the new library voted to transfer ownership of the books and other library property to the town. With the completion of the new town hall in 1888, the collection was removed to its present quarters. With additions erected for the expanding library in 1938 and 1963, the library today is one of the finest in the East Bay area, serving local and regional patrons.

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Paralleling the resolutions for the erection of a town hall were proposals for erecting a public high school in Barrington. The nearby town of Warren opened a high school in 1848, and from 1870 a private secondary school was operated in Barrington by Isaac F. Cady in a building he had constructed on Prince's Hill. Finally, in 1884, George L. Smith secured community backing for a high school which was held in Mr. Cady's building. With completion of the town hall in 1888, rooms were set aside for the high school, which remained in this building until moving to the adjacent Peck School in 1917.

The construction of the Peck School followed changes in educational program and the growing popularity of Barrington as a residential environment. Despite the tripling of the town's population during the previous half century, enrollment in the Barrington High School remained constant through the turn of the century. School committee members blamed the lack of a commercial or manual arts program for the stagnant enrollment. The new Peck school inaugurated four-year commercial and manual arts curricula. A second major educational change was creation of a junior high school department of grades 7, 8 and 9, and its merger with the high school in one building. Both these changes were successful, and the Peck School was soon filled to capacity. \*

The uniform character of the Barrington Civic Center Historic District is the product of no evolutionary accident. The Barrington Rural Improvement Society, founded in 1881, carefully regulated development of the town, as evidenced by the natural landscape character of the eastern side of Prince's Hill. The Society was concerned with road improvements, public health, the construction of a town hall and public schools, the maintenance of cemeteries and parks, and the planting of shade trees along the highways. The park-like environment of the cemetery and the landscaping around the town hall and Peck School, including a duck pond south of the school, still show the imprint of early civic pride and planning.

\* The School today houses grades five and six. How much longer the building will be so used is in some doubt due to currently declining school enrollments.

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CONTINUATION SHEET 5 ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 2

Barrington. Two Hundreth Anniversary. Barrington: 1970

Bicknell, Thomas Williams. A History of Barrington, Rhode Island. Providence: Snow & Farnum, 1898.

"Dedication of the Barrington Town Hall, December 12, 1888."  
Program for the ceremony.

Gizzarelli, Nicolas, Sr. "A Road of Many Names." Manuscript  
history of Barrington, Rhode Island, c. 1975.

Onorato, Ronald Joseph. "Stone, Carpenter & Willson: An Analysis  
of an Architectural Firm, 1858-1908." Unpublished Independent  
Study Project: Brown University, 1973.

Providence Journal, April 10, 1916.

Report of the School Committee of the Town of Barrington, R. I.,  
of the year ending October 31, 1917. Warren: 1917.



# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

American Architect and Building News, (September 17, 1887).

Barrington on the Narragansett as a Place of Residence. Published for the Rural Improvement Society of Barrington, Rhode Island, 1890.

See continuation sheet 5

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 18.21

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,9	3076,6,0	4,62,36,4,0	B	1,9	30,82,4,0	4,62,34,3,0
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C	1,9	30,80,8,0	4,62,31,7,0	D	1,9	30,76,6,0	4,62,35,9,0

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Barrington Civic Center Historic District is comprised of Plat 21, lots 17, 18 and 19. The district is bounded on the west by County Road, on the south by Mark Wood Drive, on the east by the Barrington River, and on the north by the northern lot line of Plat 21, lot 17.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Keith N. Morgan

ORGANIZATION

R. I. Historical Preservation Commission

DATE

June 23, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

150 Benefit Street

TELEPHONE

401-277-2678

CITY OR TOWN

Providence

STATE

Rhode Island

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Barrington Town Hall

Barrington Civic Center Historic District

Barrington, Rhode Island

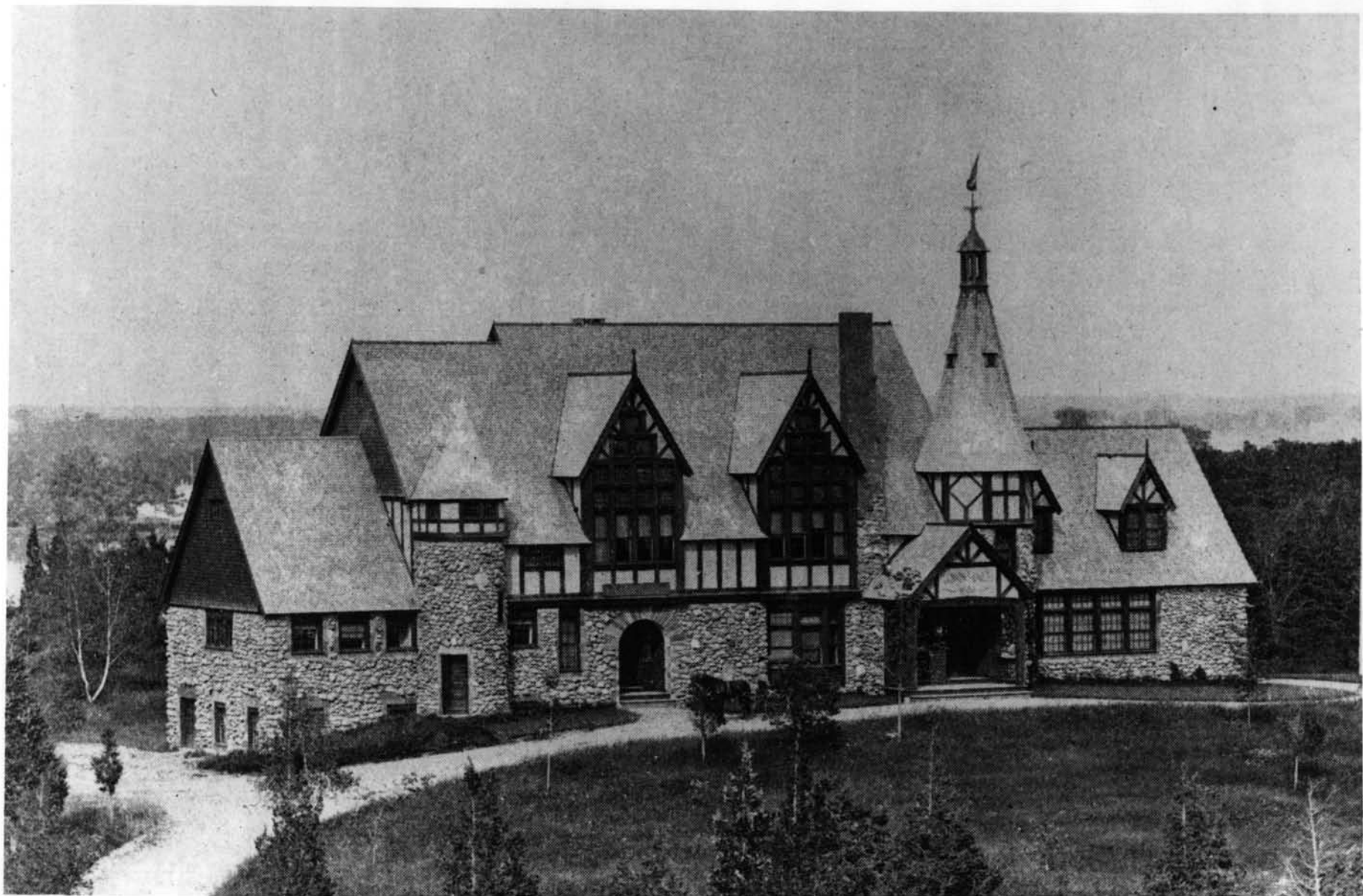
Ancelin V. Lynch

June, 1976

Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

View northeast: the southwest facade of Town  
Hall.

Photo #1



Barrington Town Hall

Barrington Civic Center Historic District  
Barrington, Rhode Island

Photograph c. 1885-1890 from Barrington on  
the Narragansett as a Place of Residence  
(the Rural Improvement Society of Barrington,  
R.I., 1890).

Copy negative: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, Providence, Rhode Island

View of the "Town Building" from the west.

Photo # 3



Leander R. Peck School  
Barrington Civic Center Historic District

Barrington, Rhode Island

Ancelin V. Lynch                      June, 1976  
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

View of Peck School from the southwest.

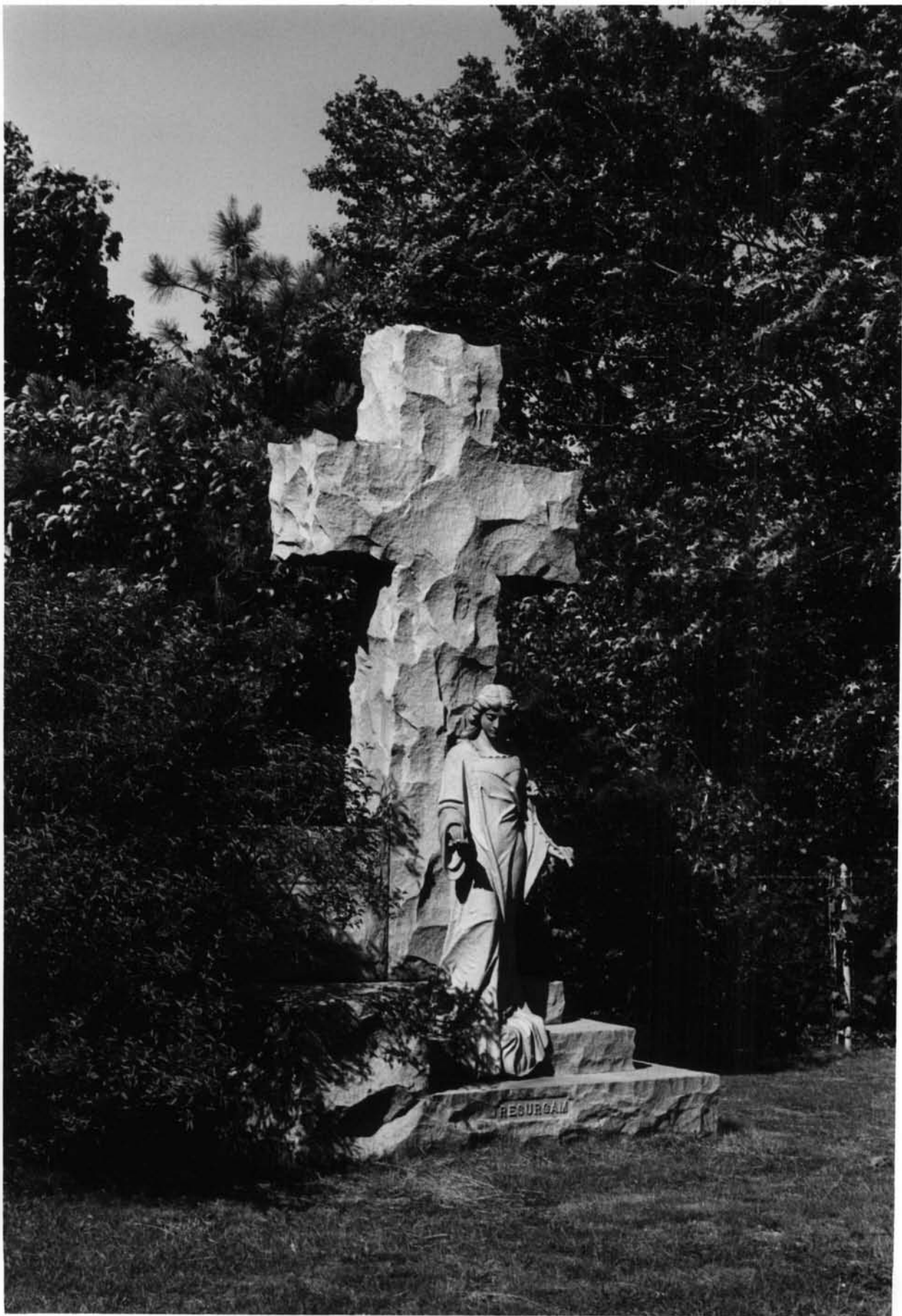
Photo #4











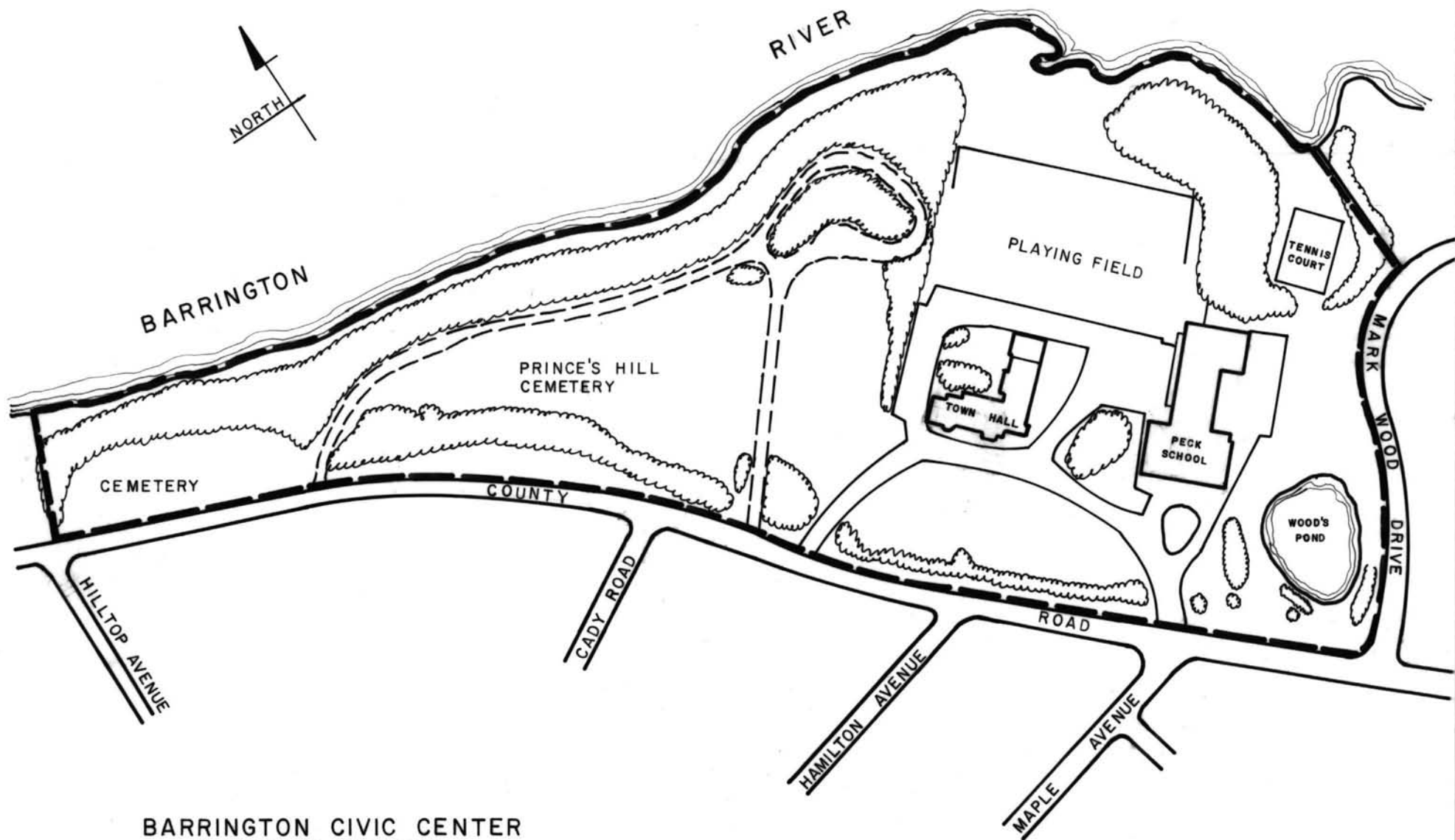
Prince's Hill Cemetery  
Barrington Civic Center Historic District

Barrington, Rhode Island

Ancelin V. Lynch June, 1976.  
Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

Ward Family Memorial Marker.

Photo #6



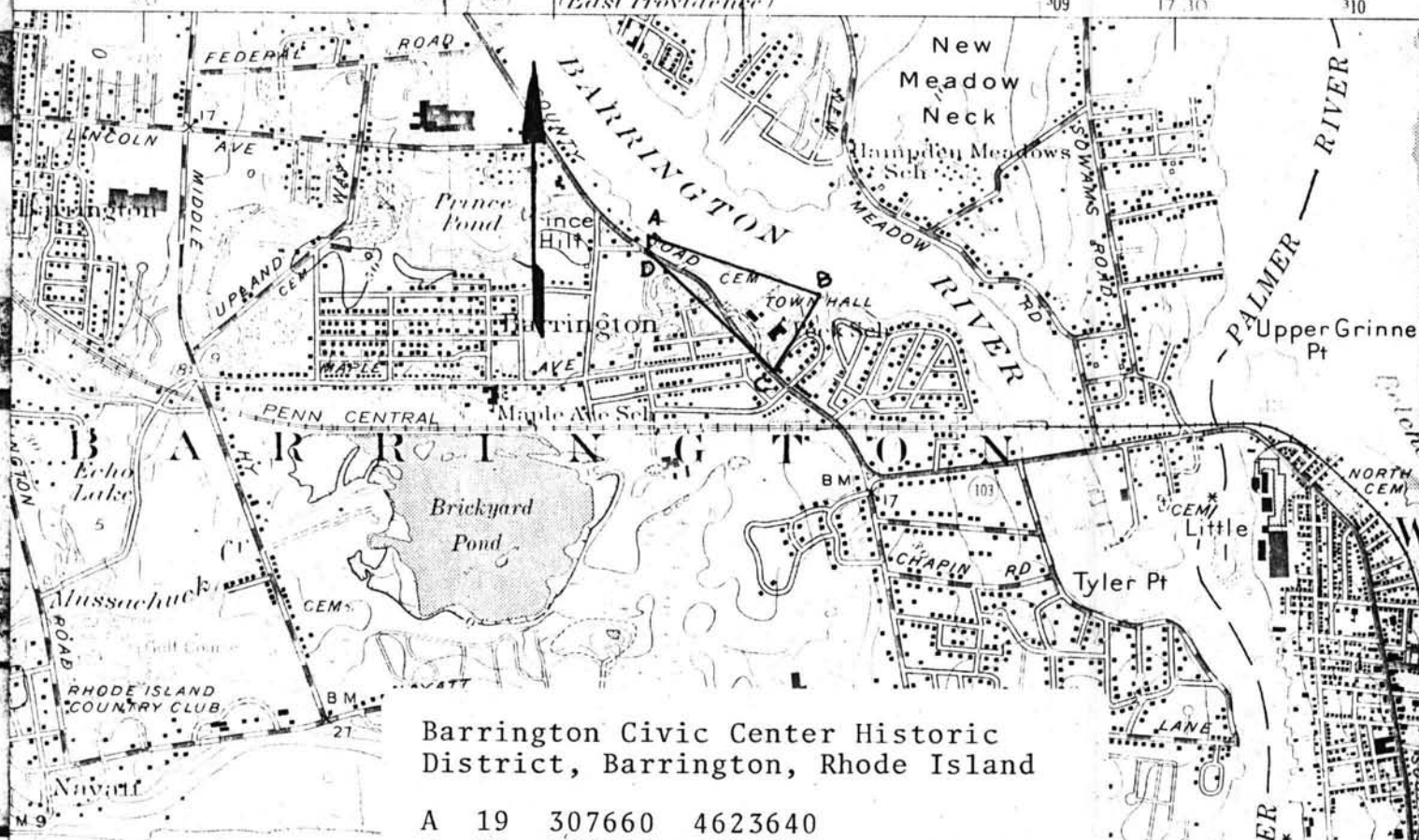
BARRINGTON CIVIC CENTER  
HISTORIC DISTRICT  
BARRINGTON, RHODE ISLAND

JUNE, 1976

Scale 1"=200'

----- DISTRICT LIMITS

EAST PROVIDENCE  
 6767 IV SE  
 (East Providence)



Barrington Civic Center Historic District, Barrington, Rhode Island

A	19	307660	4623640
B	19	308240	4623430
C	19	308080	4623170
D	19	307660	4623590

