

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Rhode Island	
COUNTY: Bristol	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Y. M. C. A. Annex

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Bristol Customs House and Post Office

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Between 420 and 448 Hope Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Bristol

STATE: Rhode Island, 02809      CODE: 44      COUNTY: Bristol      CODE: 001

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

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

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Agricultural  Government  Park  Transportation  Comments   
 Commercial  Industrial  Private Residence  Other (Specify)  Office use by social-service  
 Educational  Military  Religious  organisation is planned  
 Entertainment  Museum  Scientific

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNERS NAME:  
Young Men's Christian Association of Bristol

STREET AND NUMBER:  
448 Hope Street

CITY OR TOWN: Bristol      STATE: Rhode Island, 02809      CODE: 44

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Bristol Town Clerk

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Court Street

CITY OR TOWN: Bristol      STATE: Rhode Island, 02809      CODE: 44

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY: Federal  State  County  Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:      STATE:      CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:  
COUNTY:  
ENTRY NUMBER  
DATE  
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## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>	Good <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	Unaltered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		Moved <input type="checkbox"/>	Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Dominating the middle of a block on Hope Street in Bristol and overlooking the water, where boats once docked near it, the former Post Office and Customs House is a tall and massive, though restrained, rectangular palazzo. Set back from the sidewalk and raised upon a granite base, it has a towering presence, diminished only by the many recent structures around it. It was built in 1858 from the designs of Ammi B. Young, Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department, who helped the Renaissance Revival style become for a time the predominant one for public buildings, following the long reign of the Greek Revival--a style in which he was also accomplished.

The plain front wall of deep red brick is pierced by three large arched openings on each of its two stories. A greyish sandstone molding outlines the arches on both floors and caps the piers which separate the first-floor arches; and a decisive molding of the same material forms a belt between the two stories. The center opening on the first floor serves as the doorway; it is flanked by windows barred with iron. As is typical of the Renaissance Revival style, the second-story openings are more complex in their treatment than those below. The upper openings have granite sills, as well as a very shallow balcony of iron, on brackets, running across them. The panelling of the upper façade is understated, but the surmounting entablature is heavy and elaborately decorated. The cornice performs as the visual topping of the building, for the low hipped roof is visible only when one is at a distance from the building.

The sides and rear of the building have window arrangements similar to the front, but include some blind recesses, and the molding on these faces becomes a browner sandstone. A side chimney probably once rose near the front of the left elevation. One chimney is extant, though apparently altered, at the rear of the building. In old photographs there appears a pedimented dormer in the front center of the roof, but it was probably a later addition and is now gone, anyway. The present torchères that are prominently attached to the first-floor piers were later decorations. An iron fence of attenuated balusters encloses the side portions of the small lot on which the building is situated.

The interior is in a state of neglect today. The front area accommodated postal sorting rooms, offices and mail boxes. The original iron columns are evident between the wood panels of the clerks' windows. Also extant is the wooden vestibule. The tile now on the floor seems to be an alteration. Cast iron stairs, railed also in iron, extend up to the customs quarters on the second story, which consist of a very large main room and a smaller one. The stair landing has what seem to be its large, original tiles, and a heavy iron gate divides the landing from the lower stair run. The large room is particularly interesting because of its

(See Continuation Sheet.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

7. Description.

seven sets of iron-framed windows, with heavy iron sills and interior shutters. The scale is impressively large: the ceiling is approximately 17 feet high and there are 8-foot panelled doors. The floors are of hardwood. A very plain marble fireplace is in one corner of the large room.

In the cellar one can see the granite piers which support horizontal iron beams, which in turn support the iron columns of the first floor. The stone-walled cellar extends under the full length and width of the building and has a ceiling of brick.

Currently the building is attached to a modern Y. M. C. A. swimming pool structure and is used somewhat as ante-space, although it may in future be remodelled as offices.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8 SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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 type="checkbox"/>	19th Century <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1858

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/>	Education <input 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 type="checkbox"/>	_____
Art <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Landscape <input type="checkbox"/>	Social/Humanitarian <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Commerce <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Architecture <input type="checkbox"/>	Theater <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
Communications <input checked="" 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.)

The Bristol Customs House and Post Office of 1858 stands as an example of the rediscovery of the Italian palazzo mode of architecture after the long proliferation of the Greek Revival. Also, though small, it quite exemplifies the period in which dozens of such buildings were erected by the Department of the Treasury--virtually all of them designed by Ammi B. Young. Young earlier was a master of the Greek Revival style, and through his career one can view the popularization of subsequent styles, the emergence of new materials and methods of construction. Talbot F. Hamlin writes in his Greek Revival Architecture in America:

Engaged as architect for the Treasury Department in 1852 ... [he] continued as Supervising Architect until 1860. Of practically all of these [post offices and customs houses] during this period, Ammi B. Young was the architect. [They show] the rapid development ... toward more Italianate and baroque forms.

The Greek Revival style, however, continued to serve as a discipline for design in other styles during Young's period, and one can see in the Bristol building elements of the Greek Revival's clarity of elevation and simplicity of ornament: the massive, deliberate façade; the heavy cornice; the severe, almost anti-picturesque, feeling the building achieves. The building contains obvious and interesting differences to the Customs House in Providence, designed by Young in the previous year in a more Tuscan style. The Providence building has a more consciously classical, academic theme, but shares with the Bristol edifice a severely plain wall treatment with sharply-cut openings, a pronounced verticality, and numerous structural innovations.

The Bristol work serves as an excellent example of a style that is little represented in a town which has fine buildings of other styles and periods, and is a reminder of what was once one of the most active seaports in the northeast. Fortunately the building has found a new use and will be of continued value to the town practically as well as historically. It is hoped (and expected) that the planned interior renovations will be handled with due regard to the existing architecture.

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

U. S. 34th Congress, 3rd Session, Vol. 2, House Executive Document 2, Report of the Secretary of the Treasury ... for the Year Ending June 30, 1856. "Report on Public Buildings." (In Congressional Serial Set, Series 896, pp. 543-583.)

**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 ° 39 ' 58.45 " N	71 ° 16 ' 31.53 " 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:  
B. Christopher Bene, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission

DATE: Sept. 15, 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 \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

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STREET AND NUMBER: Between 420 and 448 Hope Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Bristol			
STATE: Rhode Island	CODE 44	COUNTY: Bristol	CODE 001
<b>3. PHOTO REFERENCE</b>			
PHOTO CREDIT: Not known			
DATE OF PHOTO: C. 1860-1869; copy negative, 1972			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, State House, 90 Smith Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02903			
<b>4. IDENTIFICATION</b>			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.  Copy of a stereoscopic view of the 1860's, showing eaves balustrade then in place and corner "chimneys" which perhaps disguised ventilators. The dormers, now removed, may not have been a part of Young's original design.			





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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AND/OR HISTORIC: Bristol Customs House and Post Office

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Between h20 and h48 Hope Street

CITY OR TOWN:  
Bristol

STATE: Rhode Island	CODE h4	COUNTY: Bristol	CODE 001
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3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher Bene

DATE OF PHOTO: 1971

NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, State House,  
90 Smith Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02903

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.  
Entrance front.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher Bene

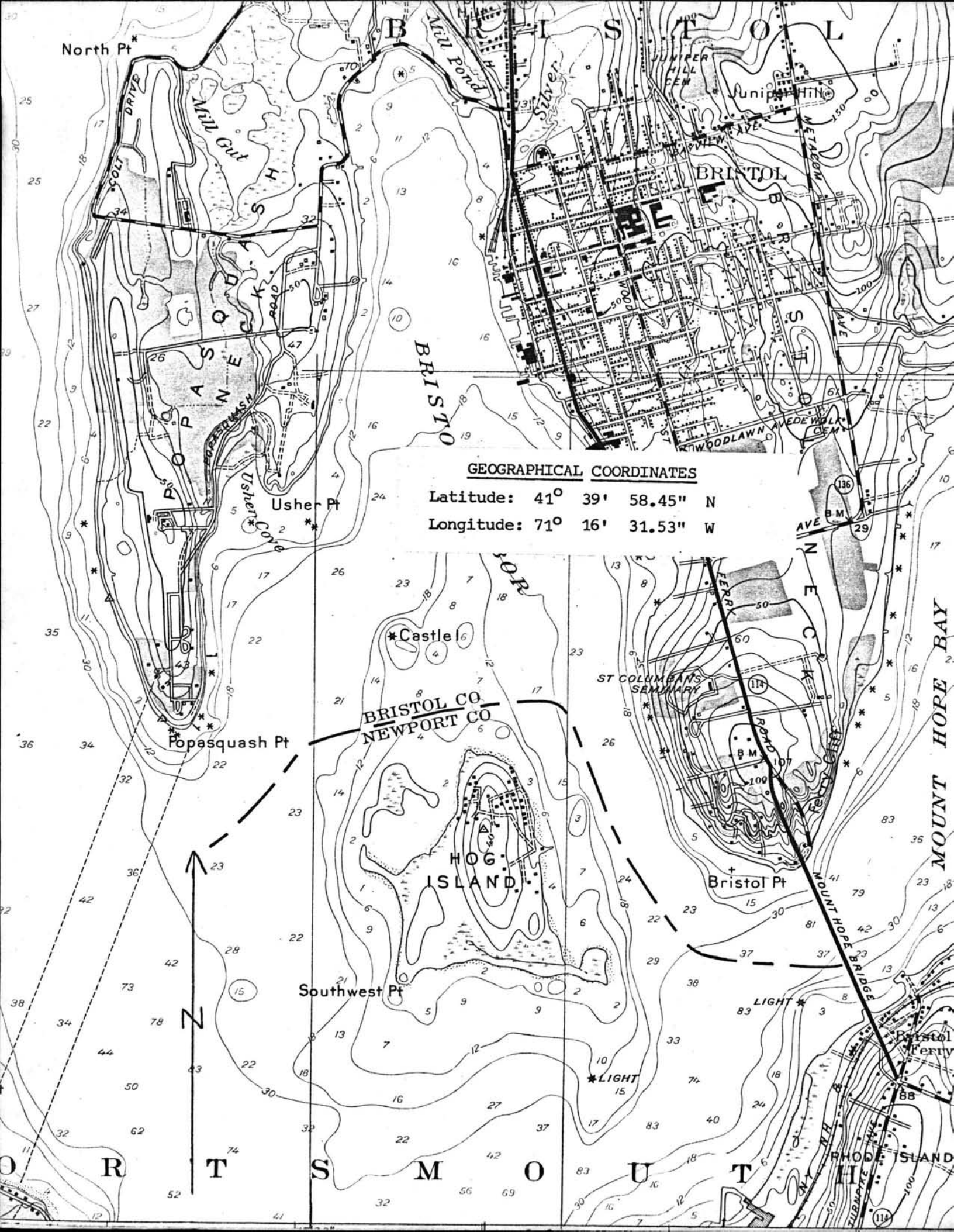
DATE OF PHOTO: 1971

NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, State House,  
90 Smith Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02903

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Detail of principal interior staircase of cast-iron.



GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES

Latitude:  $41^{\circ} 39' 58.45''$  N

Longitude:  $71^{\circ} 16' 31.53''$  W

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
PROPERTY MAP FORM

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

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COUNTY:

Bristol

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001

3. MAP REFERENCE

SOURCE:

U. S. Geological Survey

SCALE: 1: 24,000

DATE: 1955

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

1. Property boundaries where required.
2. North arrow.
3. Latitude and longitude reference.