

UP TO DATE 7/77

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM
(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)
(Type all entries complete applicable sections)

STATE:	Rhode Island
COUNTY:	Newport
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY DATE:	

1. NAME

COMMON:
Redwood Library

AND/OR HISTORIC:
Redwood Library

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
50 Bellevue Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:
1st.

STATE:
Rhode Island

CODE:
44

COUNTY:
Newport

CODE:
005

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"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" 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 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 type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Library

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Redwood Library and Athenaeum

STREET AND NUMBER:
50 Bellevue Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE:
Rhode Island

CODE:
44

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Newport City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER:
50 Bellevue Avenue

CITY OR TOWN:
Newport

STATE:
Rhode Island

CODE:
44

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Historic American Building Survey (3 photos, 5 sheets and 18 data pgs.)

DATE OF SURVEY: 1937, 1970
 Federal
 State
 County
 Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Division of Prints and Photographs

STREET AND NUMBER:
Library of Congress/Annex

CITY OR TOWN:
Washington

STATE:
D.C.

CODE:
11

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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

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 Redwood Library as originally built in 1747-1750, was a one-story frame building with one large central room, 26 feet wide by 36 feet long, with two small adjoining offices. The principal or west front forms a pedimented temple with a four columned Doric portic. The entablature surrounds the entire building. The two offices are placed as wings, connected to the main building to form two half-pediments, beginning at the lower part of the entablature. The east front had a plain Doric pediment with a range of three Venetian windows in an Ionic Order placed in three arches. The exterior of the building was wood cut to resemble rusticated stone. The Redwood Library is the earliest building in the colonies of definite date to use the motif, although the Shirley Eustus House at Roxbury Massachusetts may antedate it. The doorframe is beautifully ornamented with a shell and dolphin frieze, providing the only light decorative element on the exterior.

Harrison also used design books for the interior of the building. The elaborately architectonic bookcases seem to relate to Batty Langley's Treasury of Designs. The ceiling in the main room has a shallow molding design with a delicate dentiled cornice frieze around the room. The interior was restored in 1915 by Norman Isham.

Toward the rear of the spacious east lawn is a small octagonal garden pavilion erected on Abraham Redwood's Newport Estate in 1748 by Harrison. It is treated in a similar rusticated wood as the original part of the Library. Brought to the Library grounds in 1915 it fits well into its new surroundings. The gates at the north entrance are wrought-iron, dating from 1729 and were formerly at the entrance to Abraham Redwood's town house in the lower part of Newport.

BOUNDARY

The boundary is drawn to include all the property owned by the Redwood Library including the summer house which is considered as part of the landmark, beginning at the northwest corner at the intersection of Bellevue Avenue and Redwood Street then continuing east along the south curb of Redwood Street about 280 feet to Lot 106 at 11 Redwood Street, then south along this property line to Old Beach Road, then west along the north curb of Old Beach Road to Bellevue Avenue, then north along the east curb of Bellevue Avenue to the point of beginning, an area of 1.56 acres.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian	<input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century
<input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century	<input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century	

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1750

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 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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The Redwood Library, Newport Rhode Island, was the first building designed by Peter Harrison, one of America's most prominent and important architects of the eighteenth century. It is probably the most architecturally significant of his buildings, although the least imaginative in design. In 1748, the year of its conception, it was a unique example in America of Palladian Design, then enjoying great popularity in England. It is derived ultimately from one of Lord Burlington's small garden temples at Chiswick which had a classic Doric portico surmounted by a full pediment and flanked by two small wings of half pediment form. In the post-colonial years this form was to become increasingly popular and culminated in the classical temples of the early century in the designs of Thomas Jefferson and the Greek Revival.

The dependence on books is characteristic of the age and it is to Harrison's credit that he could adapt the designs to native scale and materials. After his first attempt at the Redwood Library he became better acquainted with the forms and was able to design more imaginatively, but the building stands as a monument to the introduction of a new taste and to the man who was one of the first to raise architecture to an art in America.

HISTORY

In 1747 Abraham Redwood contributed £500 to a Newport philosophical society for the purchase of books, and other Newport citizens subscribed an additional £5,000 for the construction of a library building. In June 1748, land was presented to Mr. Redwood for the structure. In July, Joseph Harrison, Peter's brother was chosen director and it was probably at his suggestion that he was selected to draw the plan. Peter Harrison, up to this time had been a sea captain and merchant like his brother, developing an interest in architecture through his extensive travels abroad. In 1748 he was in London at which time he became familiar with the Kent-Burlington circle and English Palladianism.

Going beyond colonial design, Harrison chose the temple form used by the Earl of Burlington at Chiswick and by William Kent as a garden pavilion at Holkham. Two of Harrison's books, Edward Hoppus' Palladio and Issac Ware's Designs of Inigo Jones and Others, contain a design identical

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

(NATIONAL HISTORIC INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM
LANDMARKS)

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	
Rhode Island	
COUNTY	
Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

8. Significance second page

with the facade of the Redwood Library. Nearly all of the exterior designs can be found in these two books and William Kent's Designs of Inigo Jones. In this latter volume the three range of Venetian windows used by Harrison for the original rear facade are illustrated as used at Chiswick. A similar treatment, with more detail, appeared in Ware and as the Headpiece to the Second Book of Hoppus. The doorway details can be found in Kent's first volume.

The library was completed in 1750. Large additions to the side and rear were made in 1858, when the three windows in the back were salvaged and placed to the side. There were also additions in 1875 and 1913.

During the Revolution, the building became an officer's club, and as a result about one half of the collection was lost. In 1780 it served as the house for the state assembly but in 1801 the Redwood Library Company was reorganized and has continued in operation to the present time.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bridengaugh, Carl, Peter Harrison, First American Architect, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1949.
 Downing, Antoinette F., Early Homes of Rhode Island, Richmond, Va., 1937.
 _____ and Scully, Vincent J. Jr., The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, 1640-1915, Cambridge, 1951.
 Morrison, Hugh, Early American Architecture, New York, 1952.

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		UTM	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SE	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	
SW	° ' "	° ' "		° ' "	° ' "	

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 1.5 ACRES

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Patricia Heintzelman, architectural historian, Landmark Review Project, original form prepared by Charles Shedd, Jr., 1960.

ORGANIZATION: Historic Sites Survey DATE: 1/21/75

STREET AND NUMBER: 1100 L. Street, N.W.

CITY OR TOWN: Washington STATE: D.C. CODE: 11

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: _____ (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Title: _____

Date: _____ (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS) Landmark 059 / 1975

Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation _____ date _____

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS) Boundary Certified: _____ date _____

ATTEST: _____ Chief Dist. & Arch. Surveys _____ date _____

Boundary Affirmed: _____

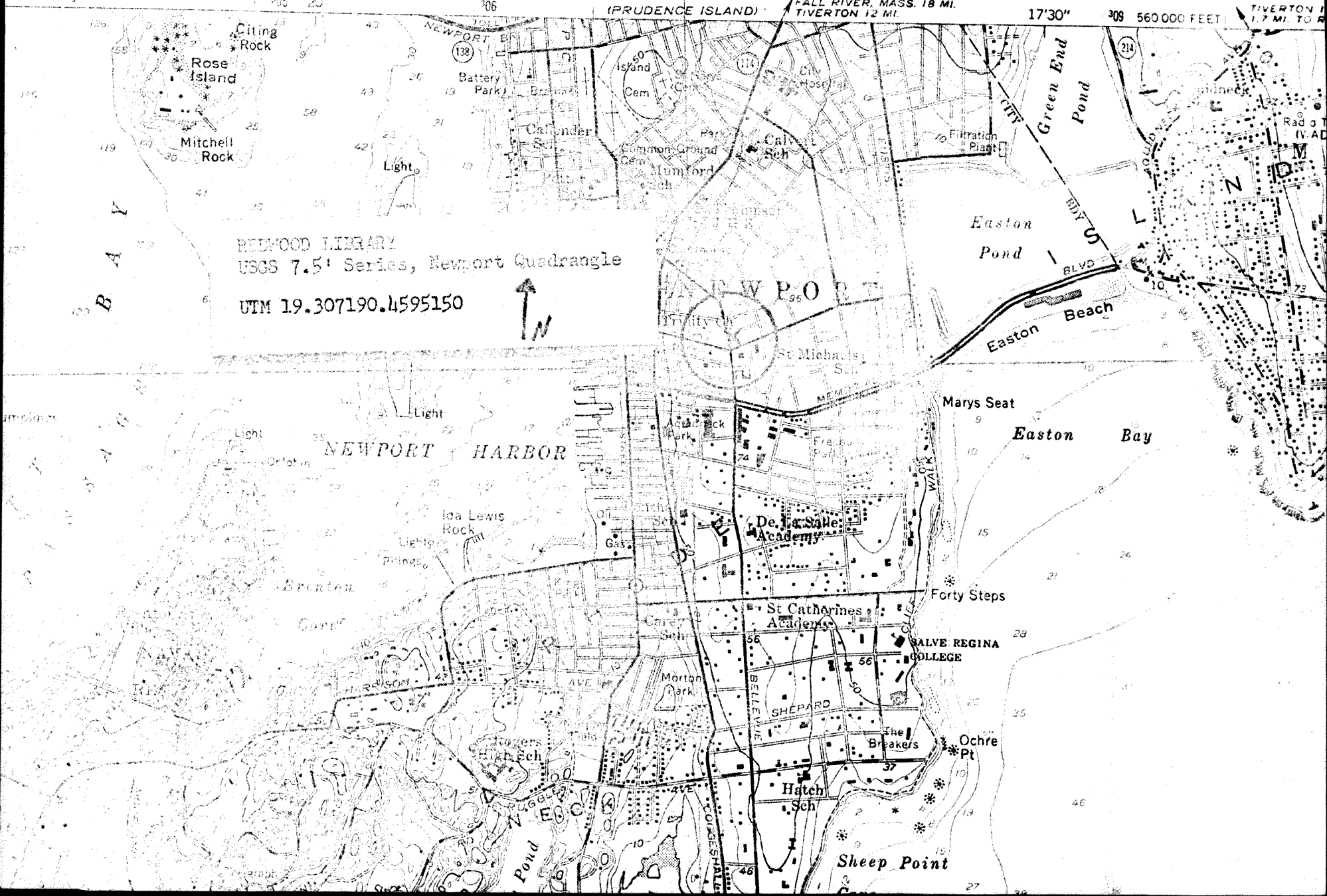
Keeper of the _____ 1/21/75

Date _____ Director, _____ date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

304 306 20' 306 (PRUDENCE ISLAND) FALL RIVER, MASS. 18 MI. TIVERTON 12 MI. 17'30" 309 560 000 FEET TIVERTON 1.7 MI. TO R

BEDWOOD LIBRARY
USGS 7.5' Series, Newport Quadrangle
UTM 19.307190.4595150



B
A
Y

NEWPORT HARBOR

Easton Pond
Green End Pond
Easton Beach

De La Salle Academy

St. Catherine's Academy

SALVE REGINA COLLEGE

Sheep Point

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

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

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Newport	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON: Redwood Library			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Redwood Library			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 50 Bellevue Avenue			
CITY OR TOWN: Newport			
STATE: Rhode Island	CODE 44	COUNTY: Newport	CODE 005
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE: U.S.G.S. 7.5' Series Newport Quadrangle			
SCALE: 1:24000			
DATE: 1957 photorevised 1970			
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			

Form 10-817
(Sept. 1957)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE Rhode Island	2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO. Theme XX, Architecture (Colonial)
3. NAME(S) OF SITE Redwood Library and Athenaeum	4. APPROX. ACREAGE 1 acre
5. EXACT LOCATION (County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet) 50 Bellevue Avenue, Newport, Newport County.	
6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (Also administrator if different from owner) Redwood Library and Athenaeum, Newport.	
7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant)	

Designed by Peter Harrison, the most distinguished architect of colonial America and erected in 1748-50, the Redwood Library is probably the least successful in design and yet the most architecturally significant of his many buildings. It was important at the time because it was a unique exemplar in America of the newest English mode--the Palladian style, and it also pointed to the direction of the future evolution of architectural style. With its Roman-Doric temple facade, approached by steps between parotids, and with its pedimental gable carried back to form the main roof slope, it was the first approximation in America of the classical temple form. In the post-colonial years, this form was to become increasingly popular and culminated in the classical temples of the early 19th century Greek Revival period.

In 1747 Abraham Redwood contributed £500 to a Newport philosophical society for the purchase of books, and other Newport citizens subscribed an additional £5,000 for the construction of a library building. Peter Harrison, an amateur architect of Newport, donated his services in designing the structure and this building represents the results of his first major architectural effort.

Harrison was well-versed in the new English Palladian mode, and he sought for proper models in his personal library of architectural books. For the facade of the library he chose a temple portico with side wings forming the ends of a larger and lower pediment, which he found in the head-piece to Book IV of Edward Hoppus' Andrea Palladio's Architecture in Four Books (2 vols., London, 1735-36). Certain details of the facade and elements of the plan evidently came from a garden pavilion designed by William Kent for

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (Give best sources: give location of manuscripts and rare works)

(Continued)

See page 3.

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, IIABS, etc.)

Historic American Building Survey: (3 photos, 1937).

10. PHOTOGRAPHS #4303-07 ATTACHED <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	11. CONDITION Excellent	12. PRESENT USE (Museum, farm, etc.) Library	13. DATE OF VISIT Sept. 18, 1967
14. NAME OF RECORDER (Signature) Charles W. Snell Charles W. Snell		15. TITLE Historian	
		16. DATE Nov. 16, 1967	

* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10 1/2 SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS
SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplement Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name, and the word (cont'd), as,
6. Description and Importance (cont'd) . . .

Page 2.

STATE	NAME(S) OF SITE
Rhode Island	Redwood Library and Athenaeum

7. Continued:

Charles Hotham and published as plate 43 in Isaac Ware's Designs from Inigo Jones and Others (London, 1735). The rear facade, especially its three Venetian windows (now moved to form the south side wing), came from a garden temple at Chiswick designed by Lord Burlington and published in William Kent's Designs of Inigo Jones (London, 1727), I, plate 73. For the elaborate book-cases inside the library, Harrison probably relied on plate 35 in Batty Langley's Treasury of Designs (London, 1745).

All this dependence on books was characteristic of advanced work in the Late Georgian period in the colonies--it was extremely academic in method, and the results were not always happy. The Redwood Library is thus devoid of color and feeling. It is also faulty as a formal design, for the projecting "half-pediments" of the wings, in their original state, were excrescences essentially unrelated to the main mass. The main mass also lacks the sheer size that warrants the grand-scale treatment of the Roman classical temple, for the library's four columns are only 17 feet high. Except for the side wings, however, the faults of the Redwood Library were the faults of an age rather than of an individual.

Seeking the impressiveness of classical stone masonry with the inexpensiveness of wood, Harrison's specifications called for an exterior surface of "Pine Plank worked in imitation of Rustick." The history of the use of rusticated wood siding in Georgian Architecture has never been thoroughly explored but it seems possible that Peter Harrison may have been the one primarily responsible for its adoption. The Redwood Library is the earliest building in the colonies of definite date to employ the motive, through the Shirley Eustus House at Roxbury, Massachusetts (c. 1747) may antedate it. The use of rusticated wood siding became fairly popular in New England after 1750. Immediately after its completion, the Redwood Library became one of the showplaces of Newport.

As constructed in 1747-50, the Redwood Library was a one-story frame building with one large central room, 26 feet wide by 36 feet long, in which housed the stacks for the 1200 books, and the projecting wings contained ~~the~~ small offices. Large additions to the sides and rear were made in 1858, 1875 and 1913. The original front central part of the structure was restored in 1915 by Norman M. Isham to Peter Harrison's original design. The structure is still used as a library and is open to visitors.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS
SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

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Page 3.

STATE	NAME(S) OF SITE
Rhode Island	Redwood Library and Athenaeum

8. References:

-Hugh Morrison, Early American Architecture (New York, 1952), 447-450, Figs. 373-75; Rhode Island, A Guide to the Smallest State (American Guide Series) (Boston, 1937), 220-221; Antoinette F. Downing, Early Homes of Rhode Island (Richmond, Va., 1937), 218-221; Carl Bridenbaugh, Peter Harrison, First American Architect (Chapel Hill, 1949), 45-53, 183-86; James G. VanDerPool, "Historical Development of Architecture in the U.S.A., 1632-1912," (N.P.S. Ms., 1966), 80 ; Antoinette F. Downing and Vincent J. Scully, Jr., The Architectural Heritage of Newport, Rhode Island, 1640-1915 (Cambridge, 1952), 74,