

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

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

1. NAME

COMMON: Sixth District Court House

AND/OR HISTORIC: Colony House or Old State House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER: 150, Benefit Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence

STATE: Rhode Island

CODE: 44

COUNTY: Providence

CODE: 007

3. CLASSIFICATION

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

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>	Government <input checked="" 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 <input type="checkbox"/>		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNERS 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.: City Hall

STREET AND NUMBER: Dorrance and Washington Streets

CITY OR TOWN: Providence

STATE: Rhode Island

CODE: 44

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than 1 acre

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY: College Hill Demonstration Grant Study

DATE OF SURVEY: 1959

Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Providence City Plan Commission

STREET AND NUMBER: 10, Dorrance Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence

STATE: Rhode Island

CODE: 44

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE COUNTY

DESCRIPTION	
CONDITION	(Check One) Excellent <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Good <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> Ruins <input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/>
INTEGRITY	(Check One) Altered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered <input type="checkbox"/> (Check One) Moved <input type="checkbox"/> Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This building was constructed in 1760-1762 and is of brick above a stone basement, with quoins and rusticated window trim of brown sandstone, a wide brick belt and additional embellishments of wood. When first built it was a rectangle of about forty by seventy feet, containing two storeys (as it still does) above a basement inserted in a steeply-sloping site between Benefit Street on the east (above) and North Main Street on the west (below). Its roof was and remains of decked, hipped form--interrupted originally on one, if not both, elevations by a central pediment at the eaves containing a circular attic window. This in turn surmounted a large, wide, pedimented window treatment directly over the entrance(s). The hipped roof was topped by a balustraded deck supporting a cupola or clock-belfry. This is the best description that can be made from an old print of the building as seen from the west (a part of Walling's 1851 Map of Providence).

Interior accommodations provided for the offices of colonial government (at that time shared between Providence and Newport) and for the government's library. On the interior, only one room--the north-east one on the 1760-1762 building's second floor--fully retains its original appearance, although throughout additions, alterations and renovations an over-all XVIII-Century manner and type of trim has been maintained.

In 1850-1851 the building was enlarged and altered by Thomas A. Tefft, but in a very sympathetic way. He extended forward a new brick entrance pavilion on the west front, with a long stair rising to a main door of Italianate aedicular form but not out of harmony with the older architecture. Surmounting this pavilion or projecting bay, he placed what looks like an adaptation of the old wooden clock tower and cupola originally in the centre of the main block's roof.

At a still later time in the XIX Century further enlargement was required, and an addition to the east front was made by Alfred Stone. He brought forth from the old east wall--directly onto the Benefit Street pavement--a block containing entrance, foyer and flanking rooms, two bays in depth and matching the original building in height. In his use of brick, of sandstone rustication etc., he was as careful and understanding as Tefft. The result is that few people to-day, unless so instructed, are aware that this building has undergone change since 1762.

This structure has been a property of the colony and state since its inception; it has always been in use and continues to be well maintained.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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) 1760-1762, 1850-1851 ff.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Aboriginal | Education | <input type="checkbox"/> | Political | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Urban Planning | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Prehistoric | Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> | Religion/Phil- | | Other (Specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Historic | Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> | osophy | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | |
| Agriculture | Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> | Science | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | |
| Art | Language | | Sculpture | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | |
| Commerce | Architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Social/Human- | | _____ | |
| Communications | Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> | itarian | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | |
| Conservation | Military | <input type="checkbox"/> | Theater | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | |
| | Music | <input type="checkbox"/> | Transportation | <input type="checkbox"/> | _____ | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

To most visitors or sightseers the attraction of this building will lie in its historic place as a one-time capitol of the state of Rhode Island, an honour shared until 1900 with the other Colony House in Newport. It housed the legislature which by a great majority proclaimed Rhode Island as the first free and independent republic in America on May 4, 1776--two months before ratification of the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia. The building now serves the state daily, though for judicial purposes only.

Others will find the building's architecture alone to be of interest, for it is a good example of an XVIII-Century building which, though not large, was intended to be imposing and expressive of the majesty of government. In this respect it was successful, aided by its siting. While no classical orders or really pompous academic adornments were incorporated into this basically simple building, a certain robust and solid quality was given to the brick elevations by the pronounced quoin treatment of brown stone at the corners and the vigourously rusticated surrounds of the windows. This same form of trim was wisely copied in the later additions.

Changed internal use and space requirements have not permitted all of the interior to remain as first built. However, the one second-floor room already mentioned which has kept its old trim still gives--with its cornice, pilaster and panel decoration--a good idea of an "official chamber" of the mid-XVIII Century. Added and rearranged rooms show in their décor admirable understanding of, and attunement to, the building's known age and style.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cady, John Hutchins: The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence, 1636-1950 (Providence, Rhode Island, 1957), pp. 37, 38, 41, 100, 194.
 Downing, Antoinette F.: Early Homes of Rhode Island (Richmond, Virginia, 1937), pp. 95, 110, 118, 157.

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 ° 49 ' 30 " N	71 ° 24 ' 26 " W	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

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: March 5, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:
State House, 90 Smith Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence

STATE: Rhode Island

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

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME

COMMON: Sixth District Court House

AND/OR HISTORIC: Colony House or Old State House

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
150, Benefit Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Providence

STATE: Rhode Island	CODE 44	COUNTY: Providence	CODE 007
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3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Historic American Buildings Survey (Laurence E. Tilley)

DATE OF PHOTO: April, 1958

NEGATIVE FILED AT: Library of Congress, 1st Street and Independence Avenue, S. E.,
Washington, District of Columbia

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
Exterior from east.



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2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 150, Benefit Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Providence			
STATE: Rhode Island	CODE 440	COUNTY: Providence	CODE 007
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT: Rhode Island Development Council			
DATE OF PHOTO: C. 1969			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Development Council, Roger Williams Building, Hayes Street, Providence, Rhode Island, 02908			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. west elevation, showing entrance pavilion and tower added in 1850-1851			



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

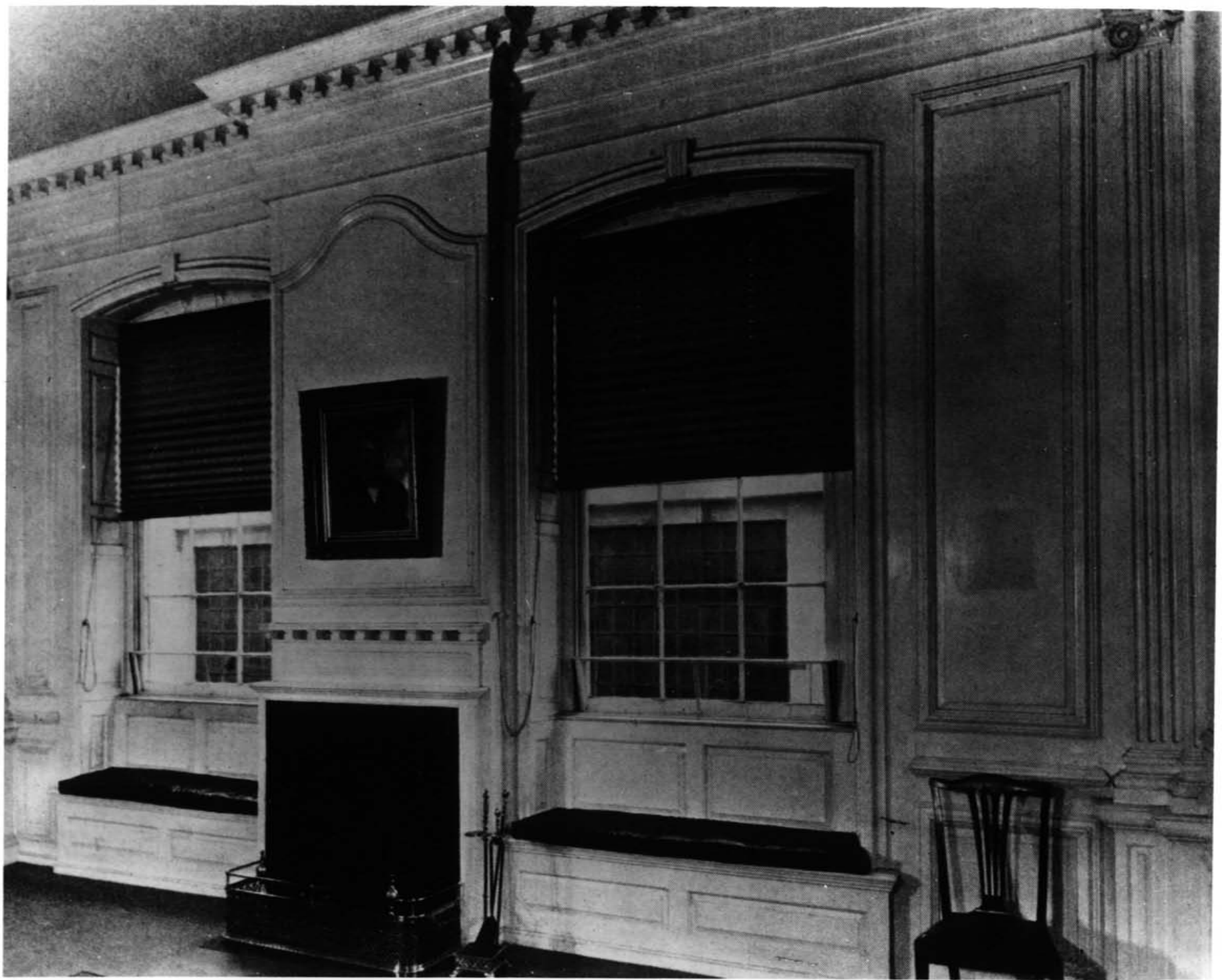
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

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

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Providence	
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1. NAME			
COMMON: Sixth District Court House			
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2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 150, Benefit Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Providence			
STATE: Rhode Island	CODE 114	COUNTY: Providence	CODE 007
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT: Alice Hauck			
DATE OF PHOTO: 1971			
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, State House, 90 Smith Street, Providence, R. I., 02903			
4. IDENTIFICATION			
DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. Court room, south-west portion of first floor, showing XIX or early XX Century woodwork in the colonial manner.			



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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COUNTY

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ENTRY NUMBER

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150, Benefit Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Providence

STATE:

Rhode Island

CODE

114

COUNTY:

Providence

CODE

007

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Arthur W. LeBoeuf

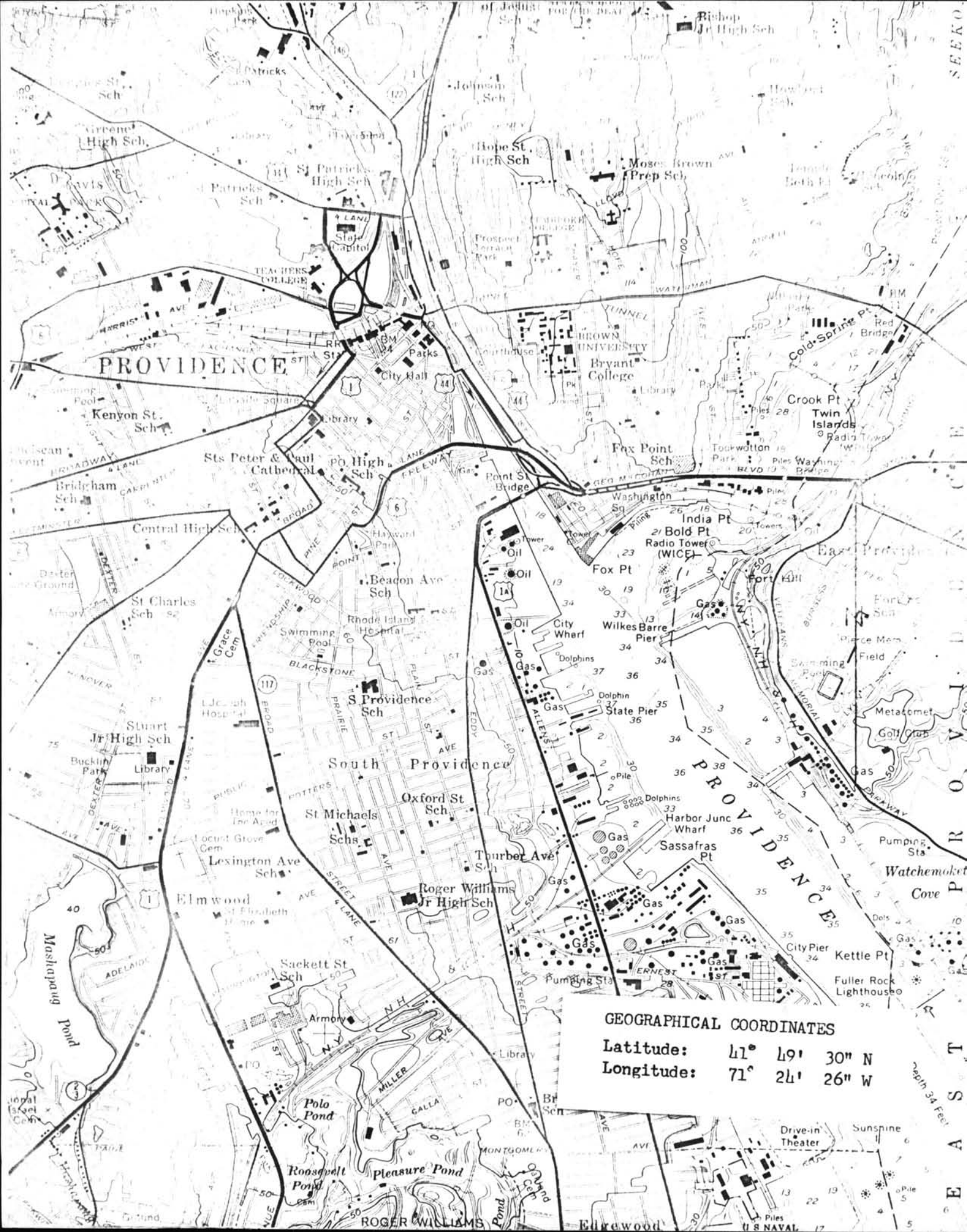
DATE OF PHOTO: c. 1937

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

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

South-west room on second floor (judge's chamber), showing original
woodwork.



PROVIDENCE

South Providence

PROVIDENCE

GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES

Latitude: 41° 49' 30" N

Longitude: 71° 24' 26" W

Depth 34 Feet

U.S. NAVAL

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY MAP FORM

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

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

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

1. NAME			
COMMON: Sixth District Court House			
AND/OR HISTORIC: Colony House or Old State House			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 150, Benefit Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Providence			
STATE: Rhode Island	CODE 44	COUNTY: Providence	CODE 007
3. MAP REFERENCE			
SOURCE: U. S. Geological Survey			
SCALE: 1: 24,000			
DATE: 1957			
4. REQUIREMENTS			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			