

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:
Congdon Street Baptist Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
17 Congdon Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Providence

STATE: Rhode Island, 02906 CODE: 44 COUNTY: Providence CODE: 007

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) _____ _____ _____ |

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Congdon Street Baptist Church

STREET AND NUMBER:
17 Congdon 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, 02903 CODE: 44

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
College Hill Demonstration Grant Study. Project R. I., D--1.

DATE OF SURVEY: 1959 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Providence Redevelopment Agency

STREET AND NUMBER:
10 Dorrance Street

CITY OR TOWN: Providence STATE: Rhode Island, 02903 CODE: 44

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:
COUNTY:
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 Congdon Street Baptist Church, erected in 1874-1875, is a fine and well preserved example of simple Victorian ecclesiastical architecture. Exterior detailing is in the (North-Italian) Romanesque Revival manner and imitates, in wood, the masonry or brick architecture of the original style. The work strongly reminds one of that of Thomas A. Tefft (1826-1859), prominent Providence architect, although Tefft had died well in advance of the construction of this building.

The structure is basically a one-story rectangular clapboarded box, set on a high brick foundation, with gable roof and tall corner tower. Windows along the length of the structure are tall, nine-over-nine, double-hung sash with segmental arches. They are embellished by flat, wooden label mouldings and very flat, sawn label stops. Sills are projected slightly and rest on simple wooden corbels. (A narrow band of raspberry-colored etched glass lights surrounds the pale yellow glass in the sashes. Some of the original etched glass has been replaced.) At the gable-end of the building to the south, a large, tripartite, rounded-arch window is similarly adorned with wooden label mouldings and corbelled sills. The opposing wall to the north is pierced by a single bull's-eye window, now boarded-in; and the wall itself has been extensively rebuilt. There is a small modern ell attached at this end.

The eaves and gables of the main structure are decorated with a sawn wooden cornice resembling a brick corbel table. This feature also seems reminiscent of mediaeval machicolations. It is repeated in a double band at the top of the hip-roofed bell tower at the south-west corner of the church. This square tower, pierced by segmentally-arched windows, is three stories tall and projects slightly outside and well above the basic structure. The stylistic influence of such mediaeval Italian buildings as the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence is strong. The upper, wooden exterior of the church has been painted white for some years; one feels, however, that it was originally painted in one color or another imitative of stone, and it is strongly suggested that this treatment be resumed at the next time of painting.

As the church is on the side of a very steep hill, its brick foundation or basement is a full story in height in the front (west). Entrance to the church is gained at this level through a simple recessed double-door at the base of the corner tower. The front wall of the basement is broken by paired, four-over-four, double-hung sash windows set beneath single segmental arches.

Above church-school rooms and a kitchen at ground-level, the interior of the church is basically one large main room, its ceiling a continuous segmental "vault" (achieved in plaster). A stairway from

(See Continuation Sheet.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

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

(Number all entries)

7. Description.

tower entrance on the sidewalk leads up to a narrow hall which runs across the southern end of the church and to a narrow balcony above this hall and overlooking the main room. At the opposite end of the main room a raised platform in front of a large, recessed, segmentally-arched niche serves as the altar and preaching area.

A rich decorative effect has been produced through simple details. The plain Victorian wainscot, window mouldings and doors are stained and treated to imitate rich wood-grain, as are all the woodwork and furniture. Like the other furnishings, the organ-case which projects into the main room, next to the altar, is carved with Gothic detail. The stencilled patterns on the organ pipes, the floral designs etched into the border lights of the windows and the painted mural adorning the niche behind the altar give color to the otherwise soberly-shaded interior.

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) 1874-1875

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 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 design of the Congdon Street Baptist Church is an excellent example of the Italianate-Mediaeval Revival style, effected with great simplicity of plan and detail. The church suggests the work of a local carpenter or builder working from architectural drawings and designs of a slightly earlier period. Details such as the corbel table, the label mouldings, and the window sills are seen in drawings by Tefft done in the 1850's, as well as in surviving structures in the area which are known to date from that decade. In 1874 these details were repeated on this church, but their extreme flatness indicates that the builder was perhaps more influenced by drawings, only, than by existing buildings.

The place of the church in the history of Providence is important and should be remembered. In 1819, Moses Brown gave land on College Hill to "the people of color" for a school-house and meeting-house. The original building stood slightly north of the present structure, just off Meeting Street and a little above Congdon Street; it was built in 1821 and provided the first school-house for black children in Providence. In 1869 this was torn down, without the approval or knowledge of the congregation, by white neighbors because its proximity displeased them.

The congregation then had to meet wherever it could while an exchange of land was effected and a new meeting-house built. The courts allowed a land exchange in 1871, and the present building at the corner of Congdon Street was undertaken. The vestry was dedicated on April 21, 1874, and the church was completed by July, 1875. The total cost of the structure was approximately \$15,000.

The church is an appreciated landmark in its area, inserted neatly into its carved-out niche in the slope of College Hill. It is in scale with the XIX-Century residential structures facing it and beyond it on Congdon Street, and is a picturesque part of the city scene--especially when it and its tower are seen at an angle as one enters or looks up Congdon Street. It is even more a landmark as a physical or visual reminder of independent achievement, high purposes, tenacity and stability (and excellent architectural taste) in the old black community of Providence, a part of whom form this church's long-established, dignified and respected congregation. They take pride in their building and give it both constant use and very good care.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Johnson, Rev. Leardrew L.: A Brief Historical Sketch of the Congdon St. Baptist Church of Providence, Rhode Island, from 1819-1965 (Mimeographed manuscript, Providence, Rhode Island, 1965), 7 pp.

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° 49' 39" N | 71° 24' 25" W | |
| NE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: Less than one acre

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

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
Clifford M. Renshaw, III, Consultant

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission DATE: April 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

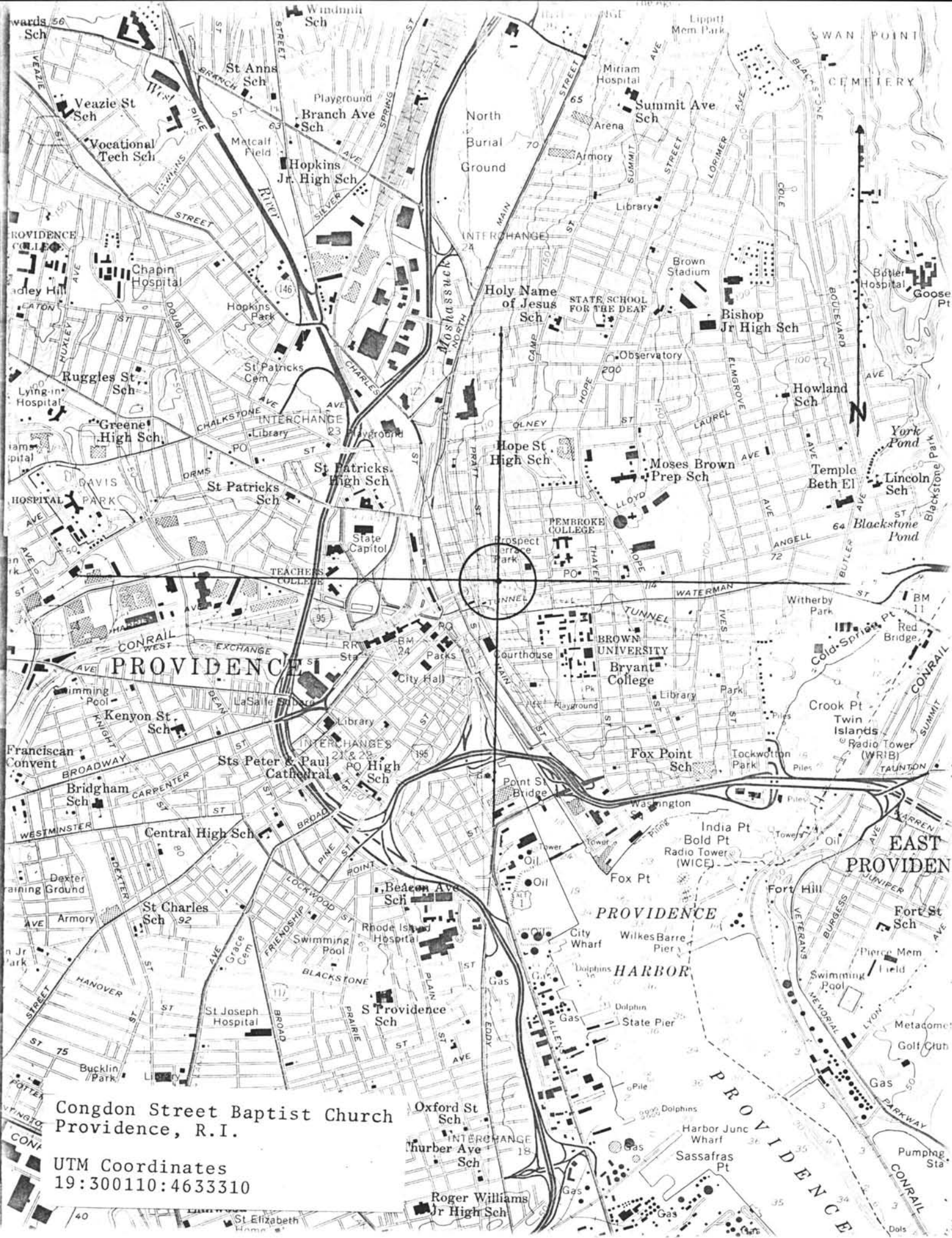
Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date _____

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



Congdon Street Baptist Church
Providence, R.I.

UTM Coordinates
19:300110:4633310

Oxford St Sch
Thurber Ave Sch
Roger Williams Jr High Sch

EAST PROVIDENCE

PROVIDENCE

HARBOR

PROVIDENCE

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: Congdon Street Baptist Church
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
17 Congdon 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

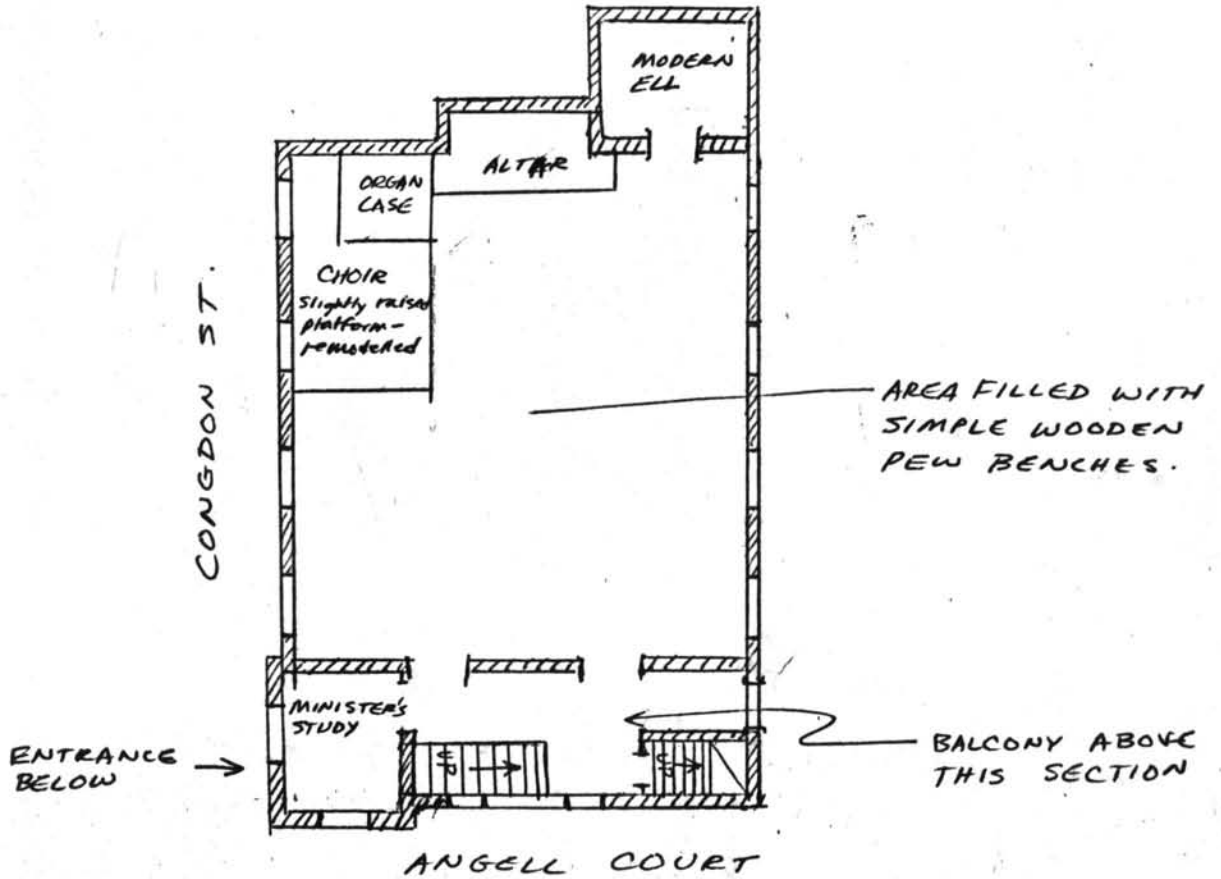
DATE: 1957

4. REQUIREMENTS

TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS

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

CONGDON STREET BAPTIST
CHURCH, 15 CONGDON ST.
PROVIDENCE.



PLAN. MAIN FLOOR

**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: Congdon Street Baptist Church
AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
17 Congdon Street

CITY OR TOWN:
Providence

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| STATE: Rhode Island | CODE 44 | COUNTY: Providence | CODE 007 |
|------------------------|------------|-----------------------|-------------|

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Clifford M. Renshaw, III
DATE OF PHOTO: March, 1971
NEGATIVE FILED AT: Xerox copy at Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission,
State House, Providence, Rhode Island, 02903

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
Sketch-plan (not to scale) of main floor.



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: Congdon Street Baptist Church | | | |
| AND/OR HISTORIC: | | | |
| 2. LOCATION | | | |
| STREET AND NUMBER: 17 Congdon Street | | | |
| CITY OR TOWN: Providence | | | |
| STATE: Rhode Island | CODE 44 | COUNTY: Providence | CODE 007 |
| 3. PHOTO REFERENCE | | | |
| PHOTO CREDIT: Clifford M. Renshaw, III | | | |
| 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. Exterior seen from the south-west. | | | |



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: Congdon Street Baptist Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

17 Congdon Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Providence

STATE:

Rhode Island

CODE

RI

COUNTY:

Providence

CODE

007

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Clifford M. Renshaw, III

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.

Interior of church auditorium, looking north-west.