

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: Grace Church	
AND/OR HISTORIC: 	

2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 175 Mathewson Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Providence			
STATE Rhode Island, 02903	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"/> Public	Public Acquisition:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied	Yes:
<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private	<input type="checkbox"/> In Process	<input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted
<input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> No
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Religious			
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific			

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY			
OWNER'S NAME: Grace Church			
STREET AND NUMBER: 175 Mathewson Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Providence	STATE: Rhode Island, 02903	CODE 44	

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION			
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: City Hall			
STREET AND NUMBER: Dorrance Street at Washington Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Providence	STATE: Rhode Island, 02903	CODE 44	

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS			
TITLE OF SURVEY: Historic American Buildings Survey			
DATE OF SURVEY: 1956	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> State	<input type="checkbox"/> County
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Library of Congress			
STREET AND NUMBER: Independence Avenue and 1st Street, S. E.			
CITY OR TOWN: Washington	STATE: District of Columbia	CODE 11	

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input checked="" 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

Grace Church rises abruptly from its cramped downtown setting. Originally built in 1845 and 1846 in the heart of the residential district, the Gothic Revival church now stands so hemmed in by commercial buildings that it is impossible to get a full view of it from any angle. The second Episcopalian structure on its corner site, it was designed by Richard Upjohn and completed (except for the chapel to the south, finished in 1854; and the spire, finished in 1860) in June of 1846.

The church is 147 feet long by 82 feet wide and is surrounded by a narrow planting strip. Its rectangular, buttressed mass of reddish brown freestone faces north and is covered by a gable roof--originally designed with skylights at clerestory level which have since been removed due to maintenance problems. The tower and spire rise asymmetrically and picturesquely from the northeast corner of the church and taper rapidly, by means of corner chamfering, to a point 206 feet above the street.

Upjohn's treatment of the exterior of Grace Church is extremely simple and uncluttered. The only ornamentation is the rather rough texture of the brownstone itself and a universally-applied hood molding, with corbels, whose splaying curve grows from the wall around each aperture. The double, panelled entrance door with its concentrically recessed moldings, the two short lancet windows to either side of it, and the three tall lancet windows clustered above it are defined in this way. Hood moldings and corbels also set off the secondary door to the west of the main door, the door and lancet windows of the tower, and the seven large aisle windows of lancet form on either side (east and west) of the church. The original treatment of the south end of the church is impossible to ascertain, since the chapel built abutting it in 1854 has been much rebuilt and enlarged over the years, completely obscuring any remnants of the original design.

Entering the church through the main north door, one finds a narthex separated from the body of the church by a black walnut organ screen carved with three-cusped arches and trefoils. (this screen is not, however, part of Upjohn's original work). Within, the nave unfolds along the three-aisle plan. It is seven bays long and is separated from the east and west aisles by graceful 14th-century-style arcades supported on filleted stone piers of clustered colonnettes, the clustering echoed by the numerous moldings in the arches.

The nave terminates in a raised square-ended chancel, originally 30 feet wide by 17 feet deep and flanked by two vestry rooms. In 1912 the chancel was extended (to a depth of 42 feet) and remodelled by the architectural firm of Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson. Upjohn's original treatment of the chancel had been one of strong, simple lines executed in black walnut--wholly consistent in texture and austerity with the body of the church. A set of three painted-glass lancet windows, the

(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.

middle one larger than the others, rose behind a walnut communion table and above a walnut chancel screen with carving similar to that of the organ screen. The reading desk, pulpit, and chairs were also black walnut carved with Early English details.

In 1882 a new tripartite chancel window with stained glass was installed and still remains. In 1912, Cram, Goodhue & Ferguson, employing the rich color of high-maintenance Edwardian "Perpendicular" college chapels, completed the refurbishing of the chancel. They converted the eastern vestry into an open memorial chapel and laid its floor and that of the chancel with colored tiles. Within the chancel they replaced the walnut furniture, moldings and panelling with stained oak. The chancel screen was replaced by an elaborate gilded triptych. The steps, altar, pulpit, and parapet were redesigned in pink, violet and white marbles. The result of the changes was a chancel harmonious within itself, but not particularly so with the rest of the church.

The wooden roof-trussing of the nave rises from corbels into elaborate five-cusped arches. Above the aisles the trussing takes the form of simple lancet arches. The ceilings of the aisles, nave, and chancel were originally plastered. The nave and chancel ceilings, due to leakage and other problems, have seen a number of alterations. The skylights above the nave were removed in 1970, and its ceiling is now covered by acoustic felt. The chancel ceiling has been panelled. The woodwork of the aisle walls is simple recessed black walnut panelling, complementing the pews. Hood moldings cap clerestory and aisle windows alike.

8. Significance.

norm for most church building in America into the 20th century. Grace Church is singularly significant as the first church in which Upjohn used asymmetry in the overall plan.

The building is as much a familiar landmark and a visual pleasure in downtown Providence, where--among department stores--one unexpectedly comes upon its mediaeval silhouette, as is this architect's famous Trinity Church in New York. It has always remained an active parish (despite the fact that for years few of its communicants have lived near Grace Church) and has been known for the outstanding personalities of a succession of rectors and for the continuing high quality of its church music.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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) 1845-1846			
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			
<p>Grace Church is important because it marks a turning-point in the ecclesiastical designs of Richard Upjohn and because it is a good, typical example of a Gothic Revival church.</p> <p>Upjohn had designed a number of churches before 1845, including his most famous and career-making Trinity Church in New York; but none before Grace Church had departed from the classical Georgian symmetry of rectangular mass with towers either centered axially or in paired positions. Upjohn, conceivably because of the corner site of the church--but more probably because of the romantic influence of the various 19th-century revivals and the picturesque aesthetic--placed the tower of Grace Church asymmetrically at the northeast corner of the mass. The "box" of the colonial meeting house or "preaching church" remains; but the uncompromising corner tower with its slit windows speaks the primitivism of mediaeval castles. Notably asymmetrical are two churches by Upjohn in nearby Connecticut and immediately following his Grace Church design--one in Norwich, 1846-1849, and one in New London, 1847-1850.</p> <p>The plainness of the exterior is typical of Upjohn churches, as is the overall construction of a rectangular mass with pitched roof and clerestory. The interior use of the three-aisle plan and Early English Gothic detail is also characteristic of the bulk of Upjohn's ecclesiastical design.</p> <p>It is important to note that Upjohn uses mediaeval details rather than actual mediaeval structural principles: that he borrows corbels, clerestories and arcades, if you will, but no flying buttresses or structural vaulting. Consequently Grace Church is a picture, rather than an architectural form, from the past. As such, it exemplifies the structural "dishonesty" common to all 19th-century revivals, which first Pugin and then Ruskin attacked.</p> <p>Completed in 1846, Grace Church, Providence, is significant in its typical embodiment of the Gothic Revival ecclesiastical style, which after Upjohn's effective use of it became and remained the architectural</p>			
(See Continuation Sheet.)			

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cady, John Hutchins: The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence, 1636-1950 (Providence, Rhode Island, 1957), p. 126.
 Hitchcock, Henry-Russell, Jr.: Rhode Island Architecture (Providence, Rhode Island, 1939), pp. 47-48.
 Huntington, Henry Barrett: A History of Grace Church ... 1829-1929 (Providence, Rhode Island, 1931), pp. 49-57, 74-78, 105-106, 117-118, 155-158, 170.
 Upjohn, Everard M.: Richard Upjohn: Architect and Churchman (New York, 1939), pp. 74-75.

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' 17.65" N	71° 24' 56.04" 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:
Ancelin V. Lynch, Surveyor-Researcher

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: lh

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

<p>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:</p> <p>National <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Local <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Title _____</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.</p> <p>_____ Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>ATTEST:</p> <p>_____ Keeper of The National Register</p> <p>Date _____</p>
---	---

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

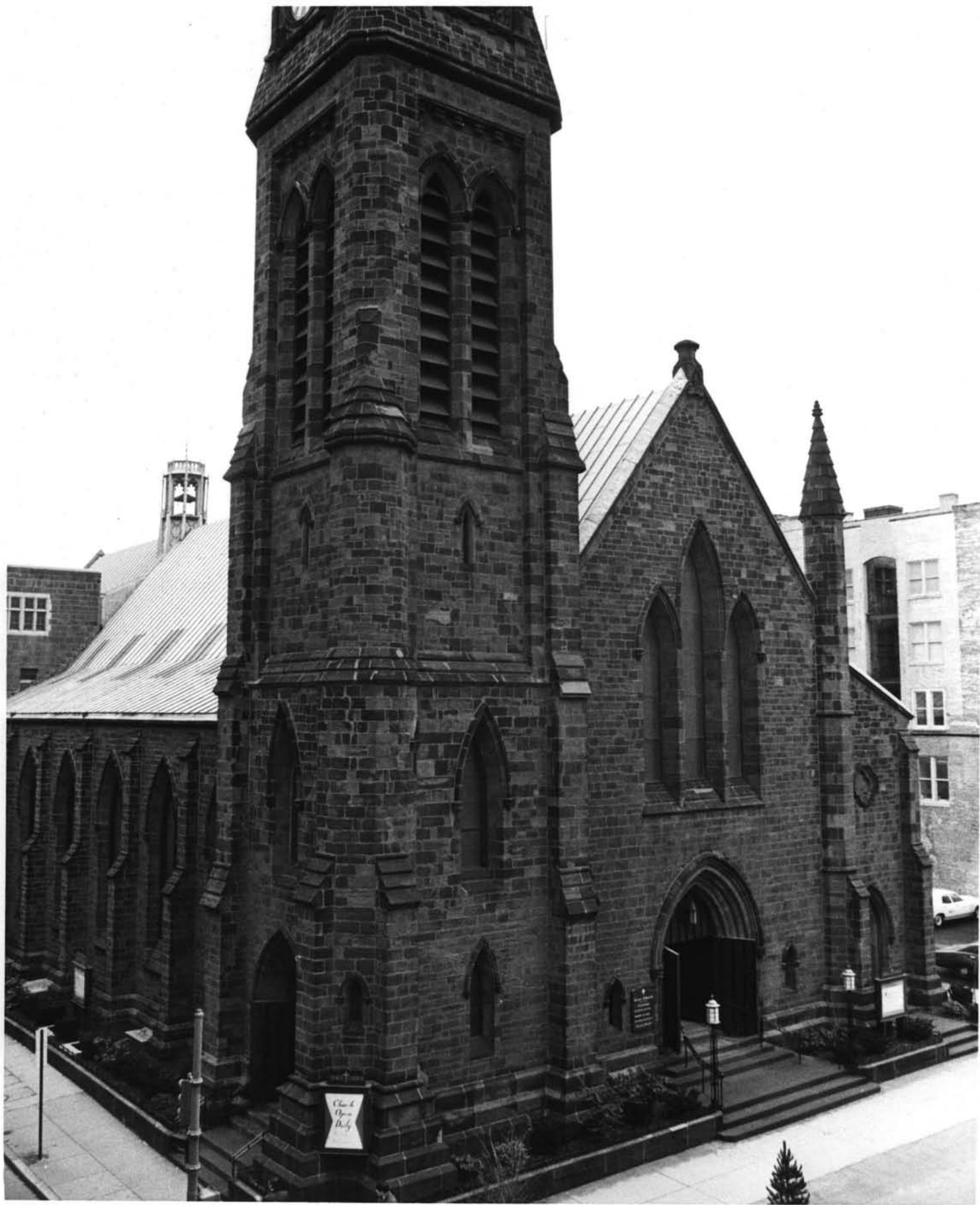
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM

(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: Grace Church			
AND/OR HISTORIC:			
2. LOCATION			
STREET AND NUMBER: 175 Mathewson Street			
CITY OR TOWN: Providence			
STATE: Rhode Island	CODE 44	COUNTY: Providence	CODE 007
3. PHOTO REFERENCE			
PHOTO CREDIT: Grace Church			
DATE OF PHOTO: C. 1965-1969			
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. View south through nave.			



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: Grace Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

175 Mathewson Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Providence

STATE:

Rhode Island

CODE

111

COUNTY:

Providence

CODE

007

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher Bene

DATE OF PHOTO: November, 1971

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

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Exterior from the north-east



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: Grace Church

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

175 Mathewson Street

CITY OR TOWN:

Providence

STATE:

Rhode Island

CODE

111

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.