

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:  
Federal Building

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Kennedy Plaza

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"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input 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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
United States Government (General Services Administration)

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Washington      STATE: District of Columbia      CODE: II

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:

DATE OF SURVEY:       Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:      STATE:      CODE:

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE:

COUNTY:

FOR NPS USE ONLY

ENTRY NUMBER

DATE

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 Federal Building is located in central, downtown Providence at one end of a large open space formerly known as Exchange Place. It was completed in 1908 from designs by Clark and Howe--an important local firm which won over nine other contestants in a design competition held by the United States Treasury Department in 1903. It exemplifies the adaptive neo-classicism of the Ecole de Beaux-Arts, whose style, under sponsorship of the National Fine Arts Commission in Washington, had become the mode for governmental buildings in the capital and elsewhere in this country at the turn of the century. It is a large rectangular free-standing structure of four main storeys above a basement or ground floor and around a light court. It is five bays in width and ten in depth, faced with limestone and capped by a hipped roof of metal. It originally housed the United States District Court, the Post Office and the local Customs bureau (the latter two agencies no longer being in the building).

A rusticated first storey provides a platform for the architectural adornment of the building on its four elevations (of which the west one contains the principal entrances). The west and east façades are each given a "palace" treatment incorporating all four storeys: a central pavilion of three generous bays is projected slightly from the main block; above arched portals at street level and a belt course which surrounds the building, there is in this pavilion an unpedimented tetra-style temple front in antis, its colossal Corinthian columns three storeys high. The antae somewhat echo the column capitals by having deep bands of carved acanthus leaves across their tops. Antae and columns support an entablature with modillioned cornice which runs around the entire building and supports a parapet of piers and balusters. A low balustrade also runs between the bases of the four columns of the temple fronts. Between these column-bases, at second-floor level, are three French windows set in enframements of engaged Doric columns supporting moulded lintels carrying sculptured swags and cartouches. In the very tall rectangular areas above these windows are set round-headed openings in which the windows of both third and fourth floors are included, giving a piano nobile effect. These openings have scrolled keystones, and there are carved swags in the spandrels. The remaining single, flanking bays of the west and east elevations have plain window openings with rusticated voussoirs at street level and simple rectangular windows, empanelled between piers, on each of the three upper floor levels. The windows of the second and third floors are given tripartite division by metal mullions; those of the fourth floor are given a similar but more pronounced division by stone mullions. To the left and right of the three portals of the west front are large allegorical statuary groups of stone, on pedestals. They are by J. Massey Rhind and represent national and civic virtues and progress.

The long sides (north and south) of the Federal Building are treated in a manner which, with a degree of majesty, is nevertheless not as ornate

(See Continuation Sheet.)

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)-1

STATE Rhode Island	
COUNTY Providence	
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ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

(Number all entries)

7. Description.

as that employed on the west and east façades. Here the corner bays are repeated above a rusticated base, but there are no temple fronts in the long stretches between them. At first-floor level runs a stretch of round-arched openings, some of which were always windows and some of which have been entrances. The three upper floors comprise a lengthy series of bays contained between colossal Corinthian pilasters and have tripartite window openings. The effect is, however, still palatial, although constricted streets and present traffic patterns make it difficult to stand off at a sufficient distance to appreciate the intended effect.

The exterior has not had noticeable alteration or change in appearance since it was constructed, with the minor exception of the recent removal of metal canopies which sheltered former mail-loading doors on the north, and this can be thought of as an improvement.

The principal lobby for entrance and circulation is within the west portals and runs the width of the building. (Nearly all the space behind it was once used for postal services but has latterly been divided into offices, both on the ground floor and on a mezzanine.) This lobby, twenty-four feet in height, has a marble pavement and handsome groined limestone vaulting, which was considered unusual in its time. There are other embellishments, such as carved ceiling rosettes, carved allegorical masks, hanging lamps, wall torchères, fine ironwork in the railing of the imposing stair. A fountain of modern composition or plastic, containing artificial greenery, was inserted in the lobby during a redecoration undertaken by the General Services Administration in 1966, when several movable semi-partitions or screens were also introduced there.

Upper floors of the Federal Building mainly contain, as expected, plain and functional offices, the necessary corridors etc.--with the usual stained woodwork, frosted glass, linoleum floors and large, undraped windows. The very conspicuous exceptions, wherein the external elegance of this building is matched, are the suites devoted to the Federal Courts, consisting of one large court-room, one smaller one and a law library. The most impressive of these is the large oval chamber of the Federal District Court on the third floor, set at the centre of the west front and utilising the arched windows of that façade. This tall room is richly panelled in oak, between fluted pilasters supporting the cornice which encircles a domed ceiling containing a stained-glass skylight. The main entrance to this room has a handsomely carved enframement culminating in a broken segmental pediment with dentils, carried upon consoles with foliate carving and swags; centred within the pediment is an American eagle atop a trophy of flags, wreath and fasces. Floor spaces in this room are divided by wrought-iron railings with cappings of polished brass. The smaller, rec-

(See Continuation Sheet-2.)

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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(Continuation Sheet)-2

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7. Description.

tangular court-room is somewhat similarly treated with oak columns, pilasters and panels and has a range of ornamental plaster-work between paneling and cornice; this room has, however, lost its skylight. The Law Library has panelling, carving and shelving of mahogany and imposing marble mantels.

Both exterior and interior of this building have always had careful maintenance. The exterior still appears as the architects intended it, and interior alterations have been, necessarily and predictably, confined to rearrangements of office and utility spaces.

**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) **1903-1908**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Clarke and Howe's well-preserved Federal Building is, inside and out, and elegant and handsome example of the Beaux-Arts style as employed early in this century to house governmental agencies with the dignity considered requisite to their status. This it would do well anywhere. However, in Providence it admirably fulfills another function--that of being a vital architectural anchor, by mass and placing, to a whole downtown area in which it also shares primacy as an aesthetic treasure (Primacy is shared with the fine, facing City Hall, an opulent mansarded structure).

The plaza upon which the Federal Building fronts is the only sizeable open space (even having a little green planting) in all of downtown Providence, and since the mid-XIX-Century it has always been bounded by the more important and monumental of the city's buildings. In the early 1900's this space was enlarged when the railroad terminal was rebuilt at a location more to the north of the plaza than, as previously, in its middle. This square is now chiefly bounded by the City Hall at the west; a cliff of tall, modern office buildings at the south; the Federal Building at its east; and the spread-out complex of the railroad terminal above a grassed embankment at the north.

As an example of architectural eclecticism handled with taste and discretion--and such was not always the case in its era--the Federal Building may be considered the masterpiece of the firm of Clarke and Howe. It was designed when Wallis E. Howe was still only in his early thirties. In its bulk and in the scale of its exterior ornament, it is very apparent that thought was given to achieving a good balance and response between this structure and the imposing City Hall of 1873, which is nearly on axis at the west end of the plaza.

The Federal Building commands admiration and deserves preservation. Its fine qualities are more easily to be preserved now that those agencies which might have caused crowding and deleterious alteration have been moved elsewhere.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES.**

Cady, John Hutchins: The Civic and Architectural Development of Providence, 1636-1950 (Providence, Rhode Island, 1957), p. 201.  
 Providence Preservation Society: The City: 1809-1908 ... (Providence, Rhode Island, 1971), pp. 28-30.

**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' 34" N	71° 24' 39" W	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Alice H. R. Hauck, Richard B. Harrington, Consultants.

ORGANIZATION: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission      DATE: July 25, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 State House, 90 Smith Street

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

**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 type="checkbox"/>      State <input checked="" 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>
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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: Federal Building

AND/OR HISTORIC:

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:

Kennedy Plaza

CITY OR TOWN:

Providence

STATE:

Rhode Island

CODE

44

COUNTY:

Providence

CODE

007

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Alice H. R. Hauck

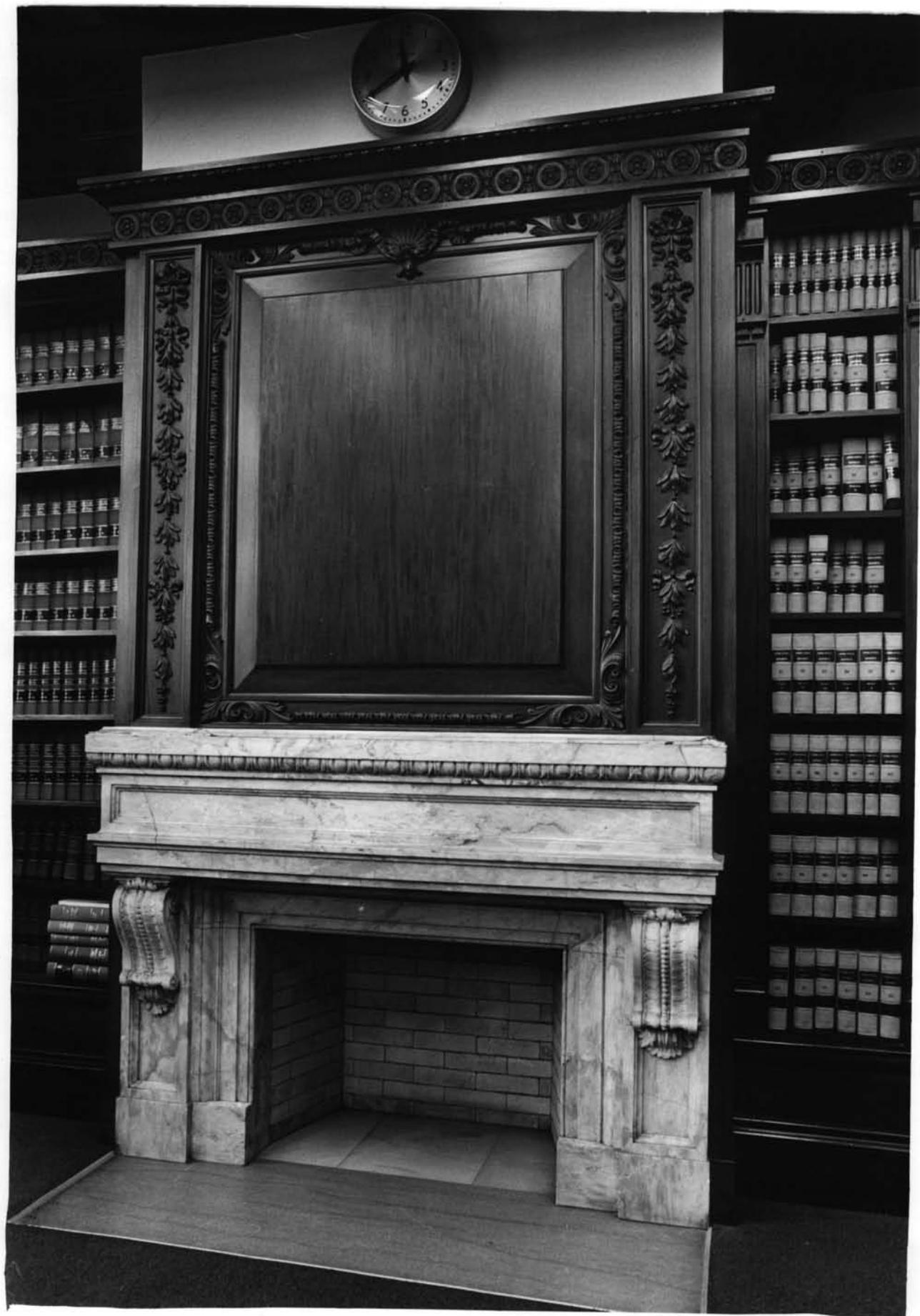
DATE OF PHOTO: 1971

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

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Interior of small courtroom.



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Providence

STATE:

Rhode Island

CODE

111

COUNTY:

Providence

CODE

007

3. PHOTO REFERENCE

PHOTO CREDIT: Alice H. R. Hauck

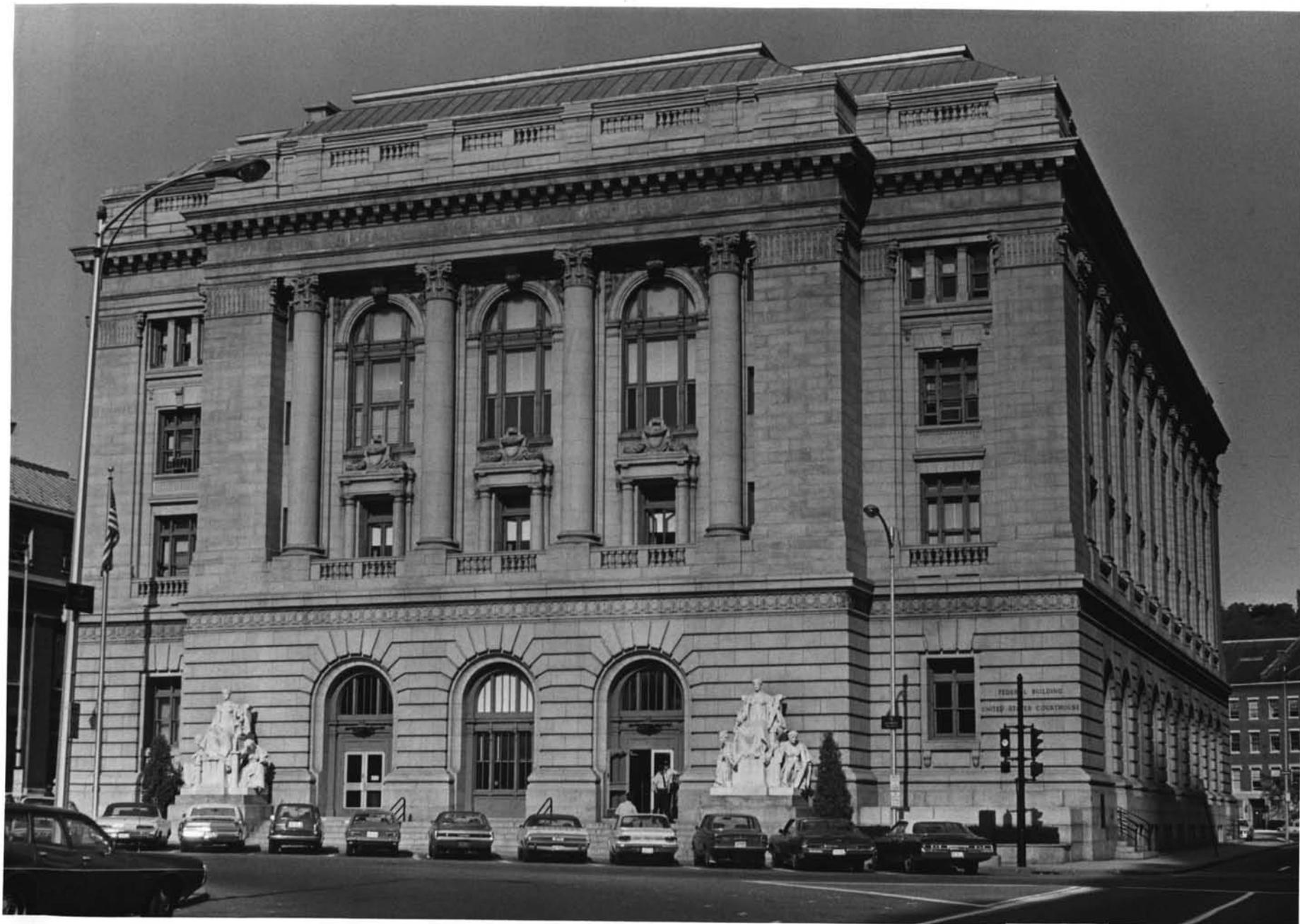
DATE OF PHOTO: 1971

NEGATIVE FILED AT: Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission, State House,  
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4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Mantel in law library.



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AND/OR HISTORIC:			
<b>2. LOCATION</b>			
STREET AND NUMBER: Kennedy Plaza			
CITY OR TOWN: Providence			
STATE: Rhode Island	CODE 44	COUNTY: Providence	CODE 007
<b>3. PHOTO REFERENCE</b>			
PHOTO CREDIT: B. Christopher Bene			
DATE OF PHOTO: October, 1971			
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.  Exterior seen from the south-west.			



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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PHOTO CREDIT: Alice H. R. Hauck

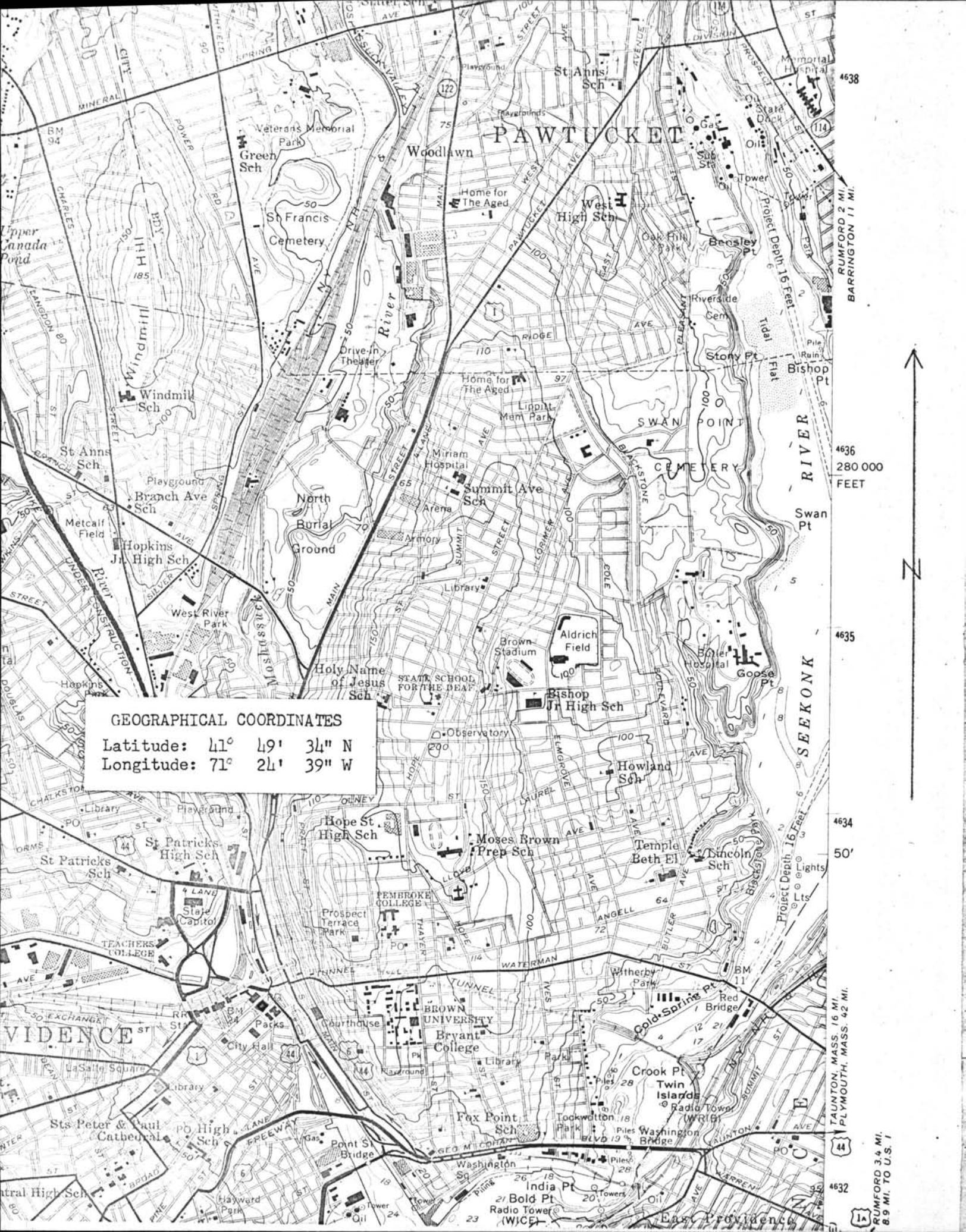
DATE OF PHOTO: 1971

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

4. IDENTIFICATION

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.

Doorway in U. S. District Court Room.



**GEOGRAPHICAL COORDINATES**  
 Latitude: 41° 49' 34" N  
 Longitude: 71° 24' 39" W

4638  
 RUMFORD 2 MI.  
 BARRINGTON 11 MI.  
 4636  
 280 000  
 FEET  
 4635  
 4634  
 50'  
 4632  
 TAUNTON, MASS. 16 MI.  
 PLYMOUTH, MASS. 42 MI.  
 44  
 RUMFORD 3.4 MI.  
 8.9 MI. TO U.S. 1



**PAWTUCKET**

Upper Canada Pond

**EVIDENCE**

East Providence

Form 10-301  
(July 1969)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

<b>1. NAME</b>			
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AND/OR HISTORIC:			
<b>2. LOCATION</b>			
STREET AND NUMBER: Kennedy Plaza			
CITY OR TOWN: Providence			
STATE: Rhode Island	CODE 44	COUNTY: Providence	CODE 007
<b>3. MAP REFERENCE</b>			
SOURCE: U. S. Geological Survey			
SCALE: 1: 24,000			
DATE: 1957			
<b>4. REQUIREMENTS</b>			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			