

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name: Saint Martin's Church

other name/site number: _____

2. Location

street & number: 50 Orchard Avenue

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Providence vicinity: N/A

state: RI county: Providence code: 007 zip code: 02906

3. Classification

Ownership of Property: Private

Category of Property: Building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Property name St. Martin's Church, Providence County, R.I.

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

See continuation sheet.

Frederick C. Williamson
Signature of certifying official

4/9/96
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

___ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

_____ entered in the National Register	_____	_____
_____ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
_____ determined eligible for the	_____	_____
_____ National Register	_____	_____
_____ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
_____ determined not eligible for the	_____	_____
_____ National Register	_____	_____
_____ removed from the National Register	_____	_____
_____ other (explain): _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
	Signature of Keeper	Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic:	<u>RELIGION</u>	Sub:	<u>Religious facility</u>
	_____		_____
Current:	<u>RELIGION</u>	Sub:	<u>Religious facility</u>
	_____		_____
	_____		_____

Property name St. Martin's Church, Providence County, R.I.

7. Description

Architectural Classification:

Late Gothic Revival

Other Description: _____

Materials: foundation	<u>Granite</u>	roof	<u>Slate</u>
walls	<u>Granite</u>	other	<u>BRICK</u>

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

X See continuation sheet.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: locally

Applicable National Register Criteria: C

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A

Areas of Significance: ARCHITECTURE

Period(s) of Significance: 1917, 1925, 1945

Significant Dates: 1917 1925 1945

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: _____

Architect/Builder: Howe, Wallis Eastburn

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X See continuation sheet.

Property name St. Martin's Church, Providence County, R.I.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: less than one acre

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	<u>19</u>	<u>301850</u>	<u>4633650</u>	B	_____	_____
C	_____	_____	_____	D	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Wm McKenzie Woodward, Architectural Historian

Organization: R.I. Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission Date: 8/95

Street & Number: 150 Benefit Street Telephone: 401-277-2678

City or Town: Providence State: RI ZIP: 02903

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Description

The St Martin's Church complex comprises a massive, stocky, granite church with low spireless corner tower, attached stucco-and-half-timber parish house, and a small, flat-roof assembly room (not visible from the street). The complex stands near the east end of Orchard Avenue, a wide residential street lined with large, stylish, turn-of-the-century single-family houses, with the exception of Percival Goodman's Modernist Temple Beth-El (1951-54) immediately to its east.

The church is oriented on an east-west axis, parallel to the street, and its exterior massing closely reflects its interior spatial organization. The high-ceiling nave with clerestory windows is flanked by low-shed-roof aisles. The three-stage battlemented tower stands at the building's southeast corner, immediately south of the lower-ceiling chancel and sanctuary which extend east from the nave. A semi-octagonal stair tower climbs the south end of the tower's east wall. North of the chancel and sanctuary is a low shed-roof section—compositionally an extension of the north aisle—which houses the sacristies. At the southwest corner is the narthex, and a smaller vestibule hugs the tower's southwest corner.

Exterior detail is restrained. Shallow battered buttresses frame each of the fenestration bays, and clasping buttresses frame the tower corners. Banked lancet-arch stained glass panels set within rectangular or Tudor-arch openings regularly punctuate the exterior walls. Large, complex stained-glass windows are located at the east end of the sanctuary, the west end of the nave, and the south side of the tower. Paneled wood doors are set within broad lancet-arch cusped frames. Exterior materials include random-course ashlar granite—in a variety of warm ochre tones—for the walls; cast-stone and limestone¹ trim for the windows, doors, and belfry louvers; and slate for the roof. The peak of the narthex's gable roof is crowned with a cross, and crocketed finials cap its eaves.

Organization of interior space is both highly controlled and strongly sequential. The principal space of the church's interior is divided into narthex, nave, chancel, and sanctuary. Immediately south of the chancel and sanctuary is the chapel, set within the base of the tower. To the north of the chancel and sanctuary are the lower and upper sacristies.

¹Cast stone was used in the original 1917 section, but limestone was substituted in the 1945 extension.

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One-story connectors link the church with the parish building at the northeast and northwest corners of the nave.

The main entrance is through the narthex, an eleven-by-fifteen-foot room with a twelve-foot ceiling² and small stained-glass windows centered on the east and west walls. Beyond is the nave, fifty-nine feet wide, eighty-five feet long, and rising to forty-five feet at the peak of the gable roof. The nave is separated from the flanking side aisles by broad-lancet arcades borne on alternating round and octagonal columns. Because of the steep pitch of the aisle shed roofs (which ascend from twelve to twenty-one feet), the openness of the arcades, and the placement of pews through the arcades, the space within the nave appears more unified than other Late Gothic Revival churches, where a high nave visually and physically dominates low-ceiling side aisles. Centered on the west end of the nave is a recessed limestone Tudor-arch niche containing the baptismal font. Centered on the east end of the nave is a broad cusped lancet arch that frames the entrance to the raised chancel and sanctuary, which are three steps above the floor level of the nave. The lectern and the wine-glass pulpit immediately flank the chancel arch to the south and north respectively. Within the twenty-seven-foot-wide, twenty-two-foot-deep chancel are rows of choir pews facing the center aisle and an organ on the south side. Behind the altar rail and raised one step above the chancel floor is the twenty-five-by-eleven-foot sanctuary, with limestone high altar raised three steps above the sanctuary floor, credence table immediately south of the altar, reredos, and sedilia on the north and south walls. Immediately south of the chancel and sanctuary is the twenty-by-twenty-one-foot chapel, also raised three steps above the floor level of the nave. At the east end of the chapel is a small sanctuary behind an altar rail and one step above the floor of the chapel; above the carved wooden altar is a small reredos and stained-glass tryptich window. Immediately north of the chancel and sanctuary are the lower and upper sacristies: the lower sacristy, to the west and on the same level as the nave, is dedicated to preparation and maintenance of liturgical accessories: silver, linen, floral decoration; the upper sacristy, to the east and on the same level as the chancel and sanctuary, is dedicated to clergy vesting.

Interior finishes are integrally linked to the church's design. Walls are textured plaster above oak wainscot. Most floors are glazed tile, with

²All measurements are approximate and intended only as a general guide for understanding relative spatial relationships.

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alternating molded ecclesiastical symbols in the chancel and sanctuary; within the pew areas the floors are tongue-and-groove oak strips. Ceilings have exposed oak rafters above the side aisles and oak trusswork—hammer-beams, collarbeams, and king posts—above the nave. The ceiling of the nave is beaded tongue-and-groove oak; the ceilings of the aisles have acoustical tile over the oak paneling.

The most significant interior features of the church are the carved oak paneling and the stained glass. The high altar reredos (1923), designed by Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue (1869-1924), depicts scenes from the lives of Christ and St Martin of Tours, the church's patron saint. The paneling in the chancel, sanctuary, chapel, and nave is the work of Irving & Casson. Of particular note are the chapel altar (1944) of Christ the King by Ernest Pellegrini, a member of Irving & Casson; the tracery lectern with statuettes of St Anselm, St Columba, and Thomas Cranmer; the tracery pulpit, with statuette-capped newel posts in the image of St Martin of Tours and St Augustine of Canterbury; and the octagonal baptismal font (1947) with limestone base and carved wood superstructure. The stained glass is chiefly by Harry Eldridge Goodhue, Wilbur Herbert Burnham, and Reynolds, Francis & Rohnstock. As originally installed, it was largely grisaille, reminiscent of fifteenth-century English examples as secularized by the Arts & Crafts movement. When the church was enlarged in 1945 (see below), new, more highly colored glass, reminiscent of thirteenth-century French examples, was installed at the west end, and existing glass was reworked in more brilliant colors.

To the northeast of the church is the parish house. Its façade is half timber, and the remaining walls are grey stucco. The slate roof is capped with an elaborate octagonal copper wind vane, capped with a whimsical child's silhouette. The interior contains seven levels arranged on a split-level scheme, with only the main level occupying the full depth of the building and the other six levels occupying alternatively the east and west halves of the building. The alternating-level scheme, not uncommon in early twentieth-century parish houses, allows for a large gymnasium in the lower cellar; stage dressing rooms at cellar level; entrance vestibule at ground level; parish hall, meeting rooms, kitchen, and scullery at the main level; parish offices at next half level, and classrooms and small meeting rooms in the top two levels.

The Great Hall is the most impressive space in the parish house. Occupying the space of two levels on the west side of the building, it features a stage at the north end and a large fireplace with Tudor-arch mantel at the south end. Tall casement windows illuminate the room on the

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south and west. The floor is oak, and massive carved oak fictive beams and joists span the plaster ceiling.

At the complex's northwest corner is a one-story, flat-roof, brick meeting room with large windows on the east and west walls. Built ca 1960, it links the northwest door from the nave and the original parish house.

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Photographs

3. Photographer: Karst Hoogeboom
4. Date: August, 1995
5. Negative: R.I. Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission

(The above information applies to all photographs)

6. View: South and east elevations, view to northwest
7. Photo #1

6. Facade, view to northeast
7. Photo #2

6. View: Nave, view from southwest corner to northeast
7. Photo #3

6. View: View from chancel to west
7. Photo #4

6. Chancel and sanctuary, view to east of altar
7. Photo #5

6. View: Chapel, view east to altar
7. Photo #6

6. View: Parish House, facade, view to west-northwest
7. Photo #7

6. View: Great Hall, view south from stage
7. Photo #8

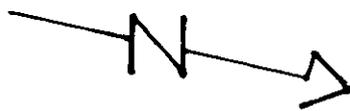
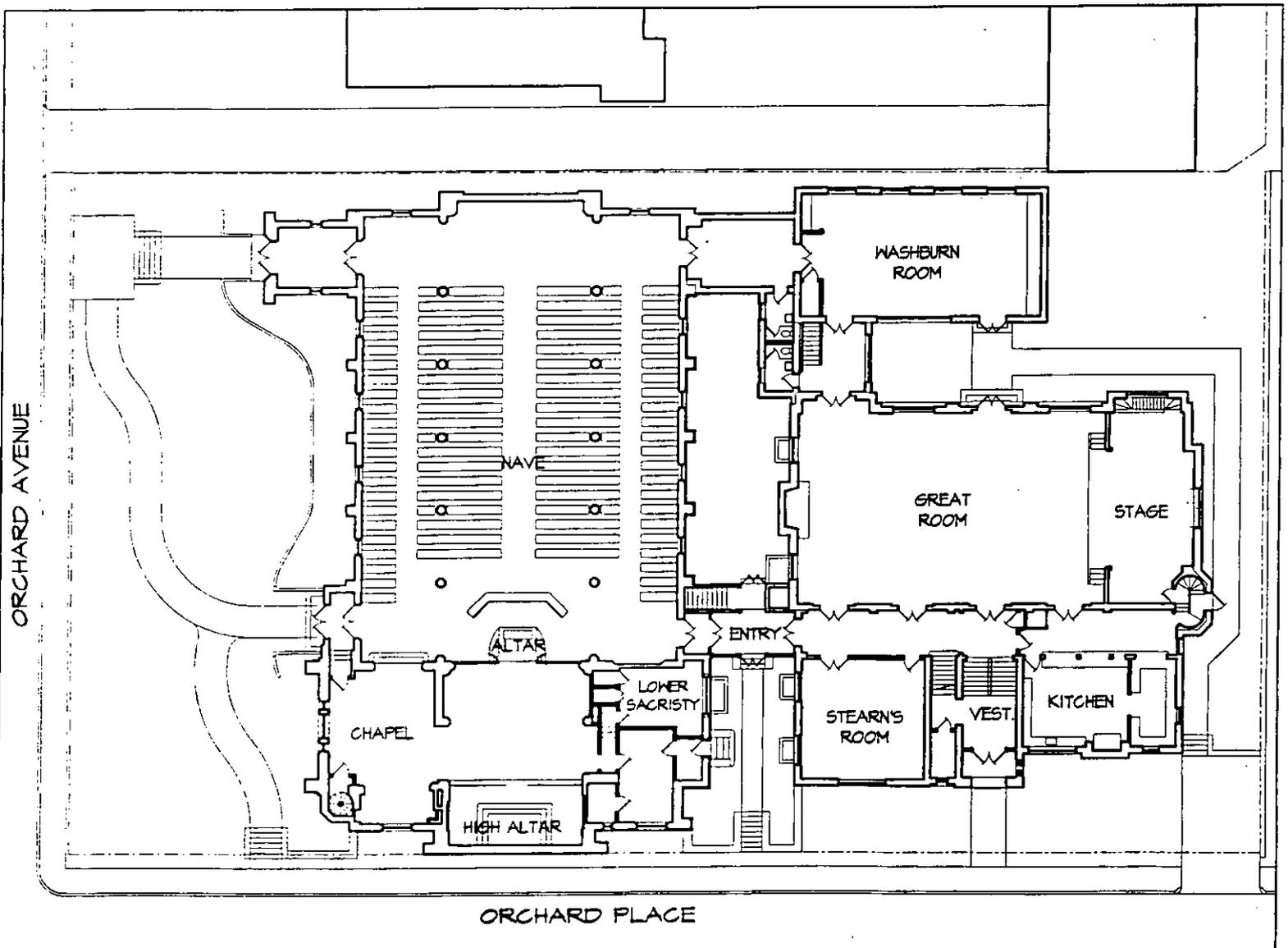
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Significance

St Martin's Church complex is significant as an important local example of Late Gothic Revival ecclesiastical architecture. Church, parish house, and addition to the church were all designed by Wallis Eastburn Howe (1868-1960), one of the state's most prolific twentieth-century revivalist architects.

The medieval parish churches of rural England were first used as sources for Episcopal churches in the early nineteenth century. A revived interest in liturgy, specifically the liturgy as developed during the Middle Ages, suggested the selection of the Gothic style as an appropriate setting for worship. The Gothic's popularity, however, spread to other building types through the nineteenth century, including houses, schools, court houses, and office buildings. In the early twentieth century, reaction to secularization of medieval sources fostered the return to a more canonical revival of early church architecture.

St. Martin's is a superb example of academic early twentieth-century ecclesiastical design. The asymmetrically massed, uncoursed ashlar exterior with low, spireless tower generically recalls thirteenth- through fifteenth-century English vernacular models. As first built, the nave was considerably shorter; it was extended and the low narthex on the southwest corner was added in the mid-1940s. The parish house (1925) shows the domestic side of Tudor England with stucco and half timbering exterior.

Wallis Howe was graduated from Lehigh University and attended Massachusetts Institute Technology. During the 1890s he worked for the Providence architectural firm Martin & Hall before entering into a partnership with Prescott O. Clarke (1858-1935). Clarke & Howe remained partners until Clarke's retirement in 1929; Howe continued his architectural practice until a few months before his death at ninety-two. Howe is perhaps better known for his fine Colonial Revival work, but for this commission he was an appropriate choice. A cradle Episcopalian, he was the son, son-in-law, and father of Episcopal priests. His father served as Bishop of Western Pennsylvania, his wife's father as Rector of St. Michael's in Bristol, R.I., and his son ultimately as rector of this parish, from 1961 until 1973. He was obviously well acquainted with the stylistic and functional requirements for church design and capable of translating those needs into wood and stone.

To finish the broad architectural strokes made by Howe, the parish engaged the very best American ecclesiastical furnishers of the early

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twentieth century. Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, who had severed his ties with Ralph Adams Cram and Frank W. Ferguson at the end of 1913, had by the time of this commission made his mark in ecclesiastical architecture and decorative finishes, notably at Emmanuel Church, Newport (1902-04); the Chapel of the United States Military Academy, West Point (1903-1910); St Thomas's, New York (1905-13); and St Bartholomew's, New York (1914-19). Irving & Casson had worked in collaboration with Goodhue since the early 1890s, including Emmanuel and St. Thomas's. Reynolds, Francis & Rohnstock is well known for its extensive work at the Episcopal National Cathedral in Washington, D. C.

To accommodate a growing number of Episcopalians in the rapidly developing upper-middle income residential area north of Wayland Square (Wayland Avenue between Waterman and Angell Streets) St Martin's was established as Calvary Church, a mission of St Stephen's Church (NR) in the spring of 1895. The fledgling parish met first in the home of James Estes on Waterman Street and in November 1895 moved services to the Moses Brown Farm House, which stood east of the present complex, across Orchard Place. By 1898, the mission occupied a wood-frame structure on the site of the present complex. As the parish grew, the original house of worship rapidly became too small, and the present church structure was dedicated in the fall of 1917. The parish house (1925) provided space for the many meetings, dinners, church school and confirmation classes, and recreational activities that typified early twentieth-century religious life. In 1946, the church was expanded two bays to the west, both to recognize the increased number of parishioners and in anticipation of the booming birth rate after World War II. Finally, ca 1960, the one-story meeting space at the complex's northwest corner completed the complex.

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Major Bibliographical References

Howe, George Locke. #18. Bristol, 1961.

Jordy, William H. and Monkhouse, Christopher P. Buildings On Paper: Rhode Island Architectural Drawings, 1825-1945. Providence, 1982.

Woodward, Wm McKenzie and Sanderson, Edward F. Providence: A Citywide Survey of Historic Resources. Providence, 1986.

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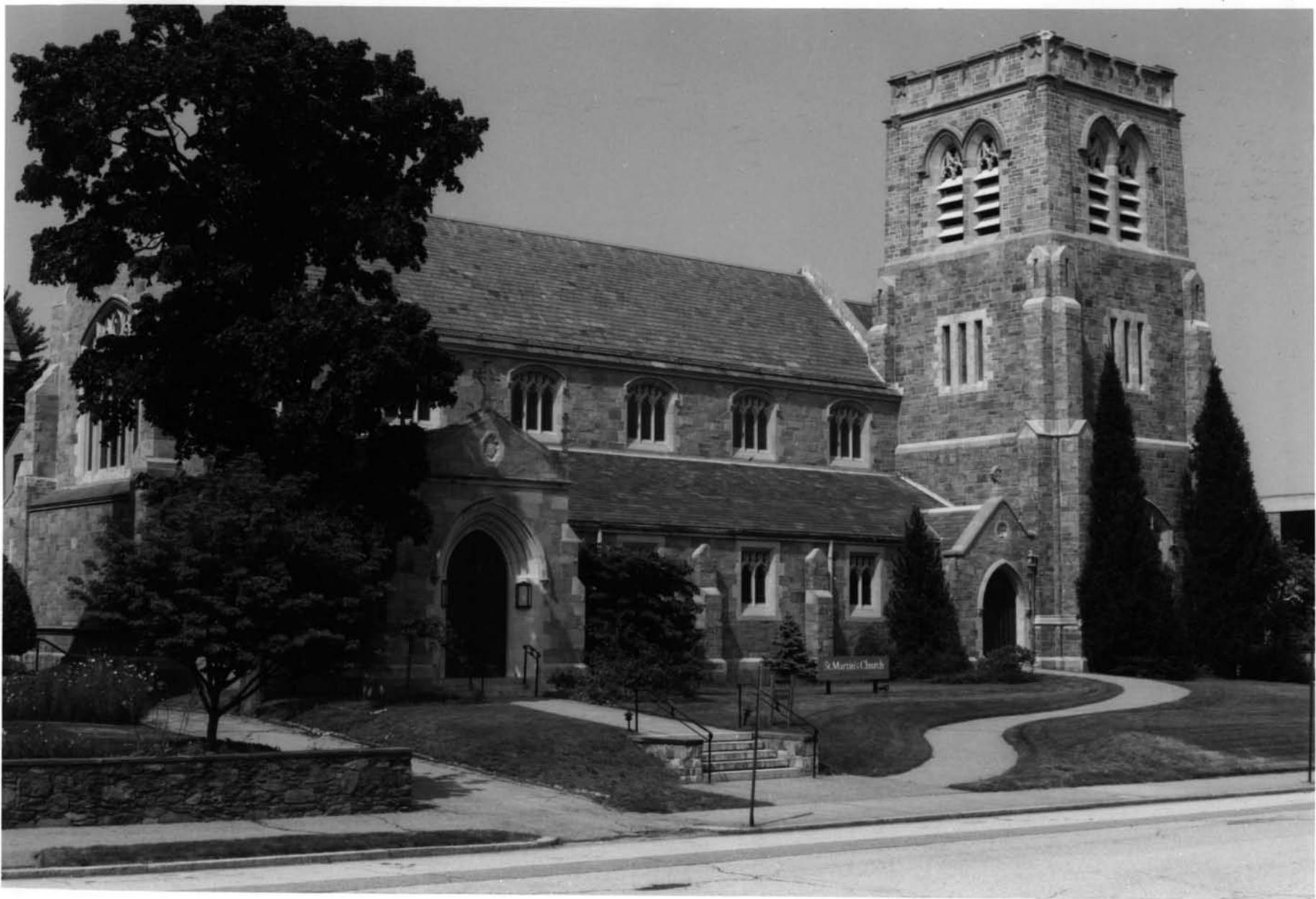
Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The boundaries of the property coincide with those of Providence Tax Assessor's Plat 39, Lot 655 and include the land historically associated with the property since the construction of the complex.



St. Martin's Episcopal Church
Providence County, Providence, R.I.

Photo # 1 of 8



St. Martin's Church
Providence County, Providence, R.I.
Photo #2 of 8



St. Martin's Church
Providence County, Providence, R.I.
Photo #3 of 8



St. Martin's Church
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Photo #4 of 8



St. Martin's Church
Providence County, Providence, R.I.
Photo # 5 of 8



St. Martin's Church
Providence County, Providence, R.I.
Photo #6 of 8



*St. Martin's Church
Providence County, Providence, R.I.*

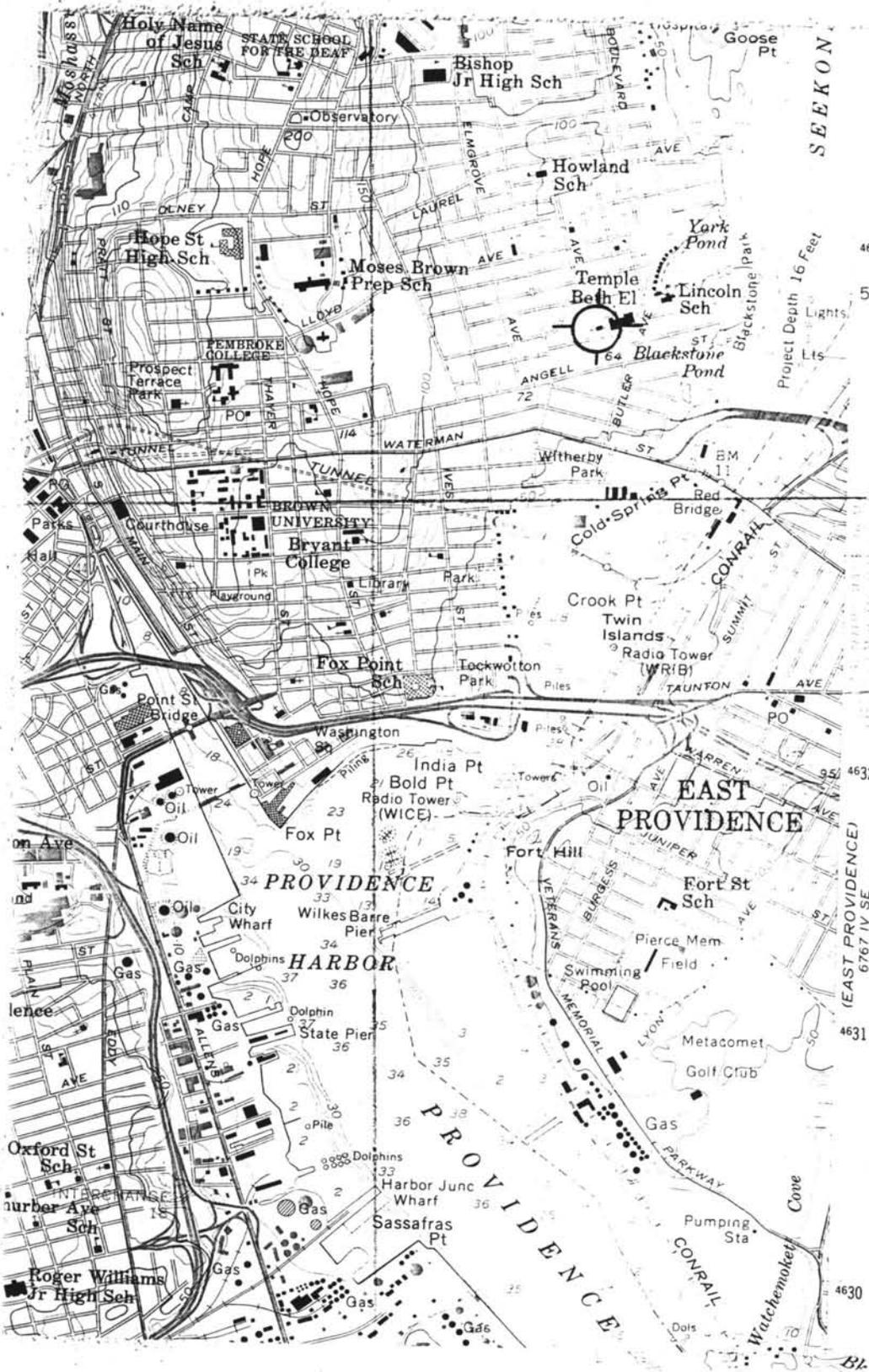
Photo # 7 of 8



St. Martin's Church
Providence County, Providence, R.I.
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St. Martin -
Episcopal Church
Providence County
Providence, R.I.

4634
50' 19 30 18 50 4633 650



SEEKON

Project Depth 16 Feet
Lights
Lts

(EAST PROVIDENCE)
6767 IV SE

WATERMANS BRIDGE
3.9 MI TO U.S.
SOUTH SEEKON, MASS. 15 MI
FALL RIVER, MASS. 19 MI

4630